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Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 2* [1776]



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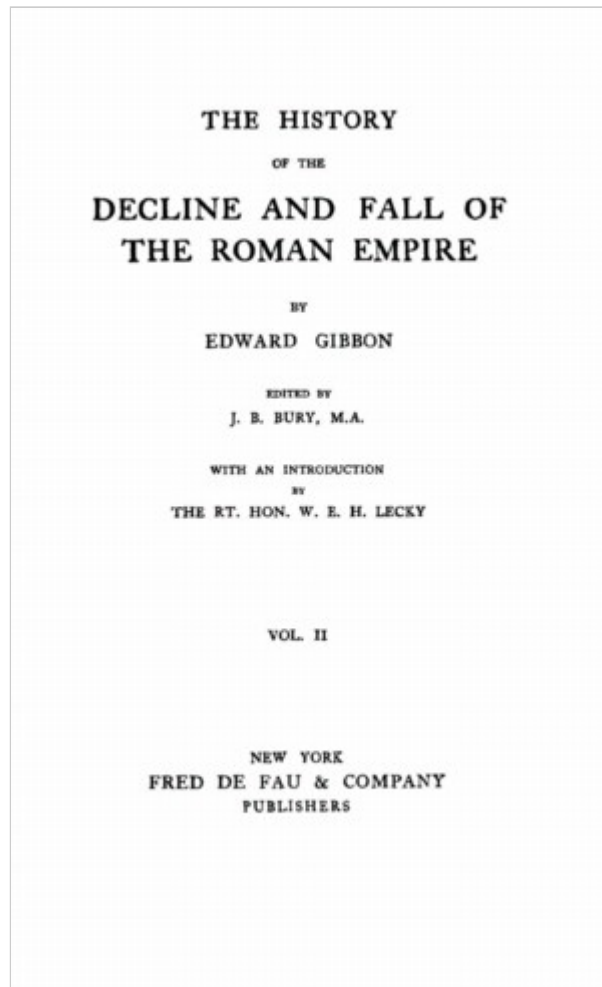
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THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

CHAPTER X

The Emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus — The general Irruption of the Barbarians — The thirty Tyrants

From the great secular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times and the scarcity of authentic memorials oppose equal difficulties to the historian, who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration.¹ Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supply the want of historical materials.

There is not, for instance, any difficulty in conceiving that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate the example of their master; and that the caprice of armies, long since habituated to frequent and violent revolutions, might every day raise to the throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers. History can only add, that the rebellion against the emperor Philip broke out in the summer of the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the legions of Mæsia, and that a subaltern officer,² named Marinus, was the object of their seditious choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded lest the treason of the Mæsiian army should prove the first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted with the consciousness of his guilt and of his danger, he communicated the intelligence to the senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of fear, and perhaps of disaffection, till at length Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to discover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed to possess. He treated the whole business with contempt, as a hasty and inconsiderate tumult, and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who in a very few days would be destroyed by the same inconstancy that had created him. The speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Philip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor, and Decius appeared to him the only person capable of restoring peace and discipline to an army whose tumultuous spirit did not immediately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius,³ who long resisted his own nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Mæsia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that

decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The Imperial troops were superior in number; but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His son and associate in the empire,⁴ was massacred at Rome by the Prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title of Augustus, he had assured Philip by a private message of his innocence and loyalty, solemnly protesting that, on his arrival in Italy, he would resign the Imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere; but, in the situation where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven.⁵

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace⁶ and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the Goths. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the Capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of Goths is frequently but improperly used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarism.

In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the conquest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and of future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes.⁷ These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths from the vast island or peninsula of Scandinavia.⁸ That extreme country of the North was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy; the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna.⁹ Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century), whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the North, the Goths and the Swedes composed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy.¹⁰ The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of

the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world.[11](#)

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddess of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival that was solemnised every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple.[12](#) The only traces that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda, a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin — the god of war, and the great legislator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the North, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either side of the Baltic were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame which he acquired of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated, during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war.[13](#)

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of Asgard. The happy resemblance of that name, with As-burg, or As-of,[14](#) words of a similar signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Mæotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the North with servitude; that Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the Polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind.[15](#)

If so many successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels with oars,[16](#) and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlsroon to the nearest ports of Pomerania and Prussia. Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the

Christian era,[17](#) and as late as the age of the Antonines,[18](#) the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Königsberg, and Danzig, were long afterwards founded.[19](#) Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburg. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people.[20](#) The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidæ.[21](#) The distinction among the Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads.[22](#) In this interval, therefore, of about seventy years, we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pestilence or a famine, a victory or a defeat, an oracle of the gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the South. Besides the influence of a martial religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to the most dangerous adventures. The use of round bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings gave uncommon union and stability to their councils;[23](#) and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *Anses*, or demigods of the Gothic nation.[24](#)

The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from all the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common standard of the Goths.[25](#) The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prypec, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes.[26](#) The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction to their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasturage to their numerous herds of cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains; the immense tract of land that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi:[27](#) we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war,[28](#) and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c., derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the middle ages.[29](#) But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers.[30](#) As the Goths advanced near the Euxine Sea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the

Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of Sarmatia, we shall discover that those two great portions of human kind were principally distinguished by fixed huts or movable tents, by a close dress or flowing garments, by the marriage of one or of several wives, by a military force consisting, for the most part, either of infantry or cavalry; and, above all, by the use of the Teutonic, or of the Sclavonian language; the last of which has been diffused, by conquest, from the confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers, which from either side discharge themselves into the Borysthenes; and interspersed with large and lofty forests of oaks. The plenty of game and fish, the innumerable bee-hives, deposited in the hollow of old trees and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the size of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptness of the soil for every species of grain, and the luxuriance of the vegetation, all displayed the liberality of Nature, and tempted the industry of man.³¹ But the Goths withstood all these temptations, and still adhered to a life of idleness, of poverty, and of rapine.

The Scythian hordes, which, towards the east, bordered on the new settlements of the Goths, presented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the prospect of the Roman territories was far more alluring; and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harvests, sown by the hands of an industrious, and exposed to be gathered by those of a warlike, people. It is probable that the conquests of Trajan, maintained by his successors less for any real advantage than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that side. The new and unsettled province of Dacia was neither strong enough to resist, nor rich enough to satiate, the rapaciousness of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Dniester were considered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king or leader³² of that fierce nation traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Dniester and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mæsia.³³ The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated, rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments scattered devastation over the province of Mæsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy

thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories.³⁴ On his approach they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater importance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of Mount Hæmus.³⁵ Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but, when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and, for the first time, their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half-armed barbarians. After a long resistance Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city.³⁶ Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome.³⁷ The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen,³⁸ entrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity,³⁹ repaired and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube, and exerted his utmost vigilance to oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms.⁴⁰

At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind, calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the obsolete office of censor; an office which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state,⁴¹ till it was usurped and gradually neglected by the Cæsars.⁴² Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and, before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprized him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. "Happy Valerian," said the prince, to his distinguished subject, "happy in the general approbation of the senate and of the Roman republic! Accept the censorship of mankind, and judge of our manners. You will select those who deserve to continue members of the senate; you will restore the equestrian order to its ancient splendour; you will improve the revenue, yet moderate the public burdens. You will distinguish into regular classes the various and infinite

multitude of citizens, and accurately review the military strength, the wealth, the virtue, and the resources of Rome. Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws. The army, the palace, the ministers of justice, and the great officers of the empire are all subject to your tribunal. None are exempted, excepting only the ordinary consuls,⁴³ the prefect of the city, the king of the sacrifices, and (as long as she preserves her chastity inviolate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even these few, who may not dread the severity, will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the Roman censor.”⁴⁴

A magistrate invested with such extensive powers would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign.⁴⁵ Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated that the office of censor was inseparable from the Imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power.⁴⁶ The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable, and, whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment, which would most probably have attended it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, the morals of a state. It is impossible for such a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit, or even with effect, unless he is supported by a quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of the people, by a decent reverence for the public opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices combating on the side of national manners. In a period when these principles are annihilated, the censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty pageantry, or be converted into a partial instrument of vexatious oppression.⁴⁷ It was easier to vanquish the Goths than to eradicate the public vices; yet, even in the first of these enterprises, Decius lost his army and his life.

The Goths were now, on every side, surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the North, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high-spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure town of Mæsia, called Forum Terebronii,⁴⁸ was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic.⁴⁹ The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. “Here the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverse to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour

heavy, the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were enured to encounters in the bogs; their persons tall, their spears long, such as could wound at a distance.”[50](#) In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be found.[51](#) Such was the fate of Decius, in the fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince, active in war, and affable in peace;[52](#) who, together with his son, has deserved to be compared, both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue.[53](#)

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, the insolence of the legions. They appear to have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed, the decree of the senate which regulated the succession to the throne. From a just regard for the memory of Decius, the Imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviving son; but an equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus,[54](#) whose experience and ability seemed equal to the great trust of guardian to the young prince and the distressed empire.[55](#) The first care of the new emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty, and, what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions.[56](#)

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin.[57](#) After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt.[58](#) But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus;[59](#) and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor.[60](#) The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration[61](#) served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent; and, as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree, when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expense of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by Æmilianus,⁶² governor of Pannonia and Mæsia; who rallied the scattered forces and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle.⁶³ Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach, of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in sight of each other, the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of Æmilianus; they were attracted by his liberality, for he offered a considerable increase of pay to all deserters.⁶⁴ The murder of Gallus, and of his son Volusianus,⁶⁵ put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and, contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the North and of the East.⁶⁶ His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant, representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the Victor, and of Mars the Avenger.⁶⁷

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time, necessary to fulfil these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall.⁶⁸ He had vanquished Gallus: he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany⁶⁹ to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and, as he arrived too late to save his sovereign, he resolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and, as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the possession of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned.

Valerian was about sixty years of age⁷⁰ when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state he had

deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himself the enemy of tyrants.⁷¹ His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and, if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been left at liberty to choose a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian.⁷² Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or at least his spirit, were affected by the languor and coldness of old age. The consciousness of his decline engaged him to share the throne with a younger and more active associate:⁷³ the emergency of the times demanded a general no less than a prince; and the experience of the Roman censor might have directed him where to bestow the Imperial purple, as the reward of military merit. But, instead of making a judicious choice, which would have confirmed his reign and endeared his memory, Valerian, consulting only the dictates of affection or vanity, immediately invested with the supreme honours his son Gallienus,⁷⁴ a youth whose effeminate vices had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of a private station. The joint government of the father and the son subsisted about seven, and the sole administration of Gallienus continued about eight, years. But the whole period was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity. As the Roman empire was at the same time, and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of domestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity by pursuing not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were, — 1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations we may comprehend the adventures of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory and perplex the attention of the reader.

I. As the posterity of the Franks compose one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted, every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed that Pannonia,⁷⁵ that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany,⁷⁶ gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its truth.⁷⁷ They suppose that, about the year two hundred and forty,⁷⁸ a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the Landgraviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Luneburg were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms;⁷⁹ of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown.⁸⁰ The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or Freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy.⁸¹ Tacit consent and mutual advantage dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience. The league

of the Franks may admit of some comparison with the Helvetic body; in which every canton, retaining its independent sovereignty, consults with its brethren in the common cause, without acknowledging the authority of any supreme head or representative assembly.⁸² But the principle of the two confederacies was extremely different. A peace of two hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn treaties disgraced the character of the Franks.

The Romans had long experienced the daring valour of the people of Lower Germany. The union of their strength threatened Gaul with a more formidable invasion, and required the presence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of Imperial power.⁸³ Whilst that prince⁸⁴ and his infant son Saloninus displayed in the court of Treves the majesty of the empire, its armies were ably conducted by their general Posthumus,⁸⁵ who, though he afterwards betrayed⁸⁶ the family of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great interest of the monarchy. The treacherous language of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a long series of victories. Trophies and titles attest (if such evidence can attest) the fame of Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled The Conqueror of the Germans, and the Saviour of Gaul.⁸⁷

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases in a great measure these monuments of vanity and adulation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of Safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees; nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years,⁸⁸ the greatest part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed;⁸⁹ and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians.⁹⁰ When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels in the ports of Spain⁹¹ and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these barbarians, who seemed to fall from a new world, as their name, manners, and complexion were equally unknown on the coast of Africa.⁹²

II. In that part of Upper Saxony, beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the Marquisate of Lusace, there existed in ancient times a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity.⁹³ Patriotism contributed, as well as devotion, to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnonen.⁹⁴ It was universally believed that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood resorted thither by their ambassadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human sacrifices. The wide-extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered

into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that showed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy.⁹⁵ Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri, who, with a vast army, encountered the dictator Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a disgrace to have fled before a people to whose arms the immortal gods themselves were unequal.⁹⁶

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an innumerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the banks of the Main, and in the neighbourhood of the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, of plunder, or of glory.⁹⁷ The hasty army of volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and permanent nation, and, as it was composed from so many different tribes, assumed the name of Alemanni, or *Allmen*, to denote at once their various lineage and their common bravery.⁹⁸ The latter was soon felt by the Romans in many a hostile inroad. The Alemanni fought chiefly on horseback; but their cavalry was rendered still more formidable by a mixture of light infantry selected from the bravest and most active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had enured to accompany the horsemen in the longest march, the most rapid charge, or the most precipitate retreat.⁹⁹

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparations of Alexander Severus; they were dismayed by the arms of his successor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But, still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul: they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated across the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome.¹⁰⁰ The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far distant wars, Valerian in the East, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency, senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the Prætorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers by enlisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the plebeians. The Alemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with spoil; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans.¹⁰¹

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted than alarmed with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the republic from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted as a favour this disgraceful exemption from military service; and, as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers.¹⁰²

Another invasion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the Lower Empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans.¹⁰³ We may however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory either to the credulity of the historian, or to some exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very different nature that Gallienus endeavoured to protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He espoused Pipa, the daughter of a king of the Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often confounded with the Alemanni in their wars and conquests.¹⁰⁴ To the father, as the price of his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished beauty seem to have fixed the daughter in the affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands of policy were more firmly connected by those of love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still refused the name of marriage to the profane mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has stigmatised the German princess with the opprobrious title of concubine of Gallienus.¹⁰⁵

III. We have already traced the emigration of the Goths from Scandinavia, or at least from Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and have followed their victorious arms from the Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus the frontier of the last-mentioned river was perpetually infested by the inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was defended by the Romans with more than usual firmness and success. The provinces that were the seat of war recruited the armies of Rome with an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers; and more than one of these Illyrian peasants attained the station, and displayed the abilities, of a general. Though flying parties of the barbarians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the confines of Italy and Macedonia, their progress was commonly checked, or their return intercepted, by the Imperial lieutenants.¹⁰⁶ But the great stream of the Gothic hostilities was diverted into a very different channel. The Goths, in their new settlement of the Ukraine, soon became masters of the northern coast of the Euxine: to the south of that inland sea were situated the soft and wealthy provinces of Asia Minor, which possessed all that could attract, and nothing that could resist, a barbarian conqueror.

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty miles distant from the narrow entrance¹⁰⁷ of the peninsula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Chersonesus Taurica.¹⁰⁸ On that inhospitable shore, Euripides, embellishing with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the scene of one of his most affecting tragedies.¹⁰⁹ The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri, the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were in some degree reclaimed from their brutal manners by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian colonies which settled along the maritime coast. The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital was situated on the straits through which the Mæotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was composed of degenerate Greeks and half-civilised barbarians. It subsisted as an independent state from the time of the Peloponnesian war,¹¹⁰ was at last swallowed up by the ambition of Mithridates,¹¹¹ and, with the rest of his dominions, sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From the reign of Augustus,¹¹² the kings of Bosphorus were the humble, but not useless, allies of the

empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight fortification drawn across the isthmus, they effectually guarded against the roving plunderers of Sarmatia the access of a country which, from its peculiar situation and convenient harbours, commanded the Euxine Sea and Asia Minor.¹¹³ As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of their important charge with vigilance and success. Domestic factions, and the fears or private interest of obscure usurpers who seized on the vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a superfluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors obtained the command of a naval force sufficient to transport their armies to the coast of Asia.¹¹⁴ The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine were of a very singular construction. They were slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only, without the least mixture of iron, and occasionally covered with a shelving roof on the appearance of a tempest.¹¹⁵ In these floating houses the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder had banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied in their minds the more rational confidence which is the just result of knowledge and experience. Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often murmured against the cowardice of their guides, who required the strongest assurances of a settled calm before they would venture to embark, and would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of the land. Such, at least, is the practice of the modern Turks;¹¹⁶ and they are probably not inferior in the art of navigation to the ancient inhabitants of Bosphorus.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus,¹¹⁷ the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual: but, as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace.¹¹⁸

Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine Sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebizond is about three hundred miles.¹¹⁹ The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebizond, celebrated in the retreat of the Ten Thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks,¹²⁰ derived its wealth and splendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours.¹²¹ The city was large and populous; a double enclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the

night, and entered the defenceless city, sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense: the wealth of the adjacent countries had been deposited in Trebizond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus.¹²² The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the sea coast were chained to the oar; and the Goths, satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus.¹²³

The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdainful of the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Dniester, and the Danube, and, increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing barques, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine Sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the strait: and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops surpassed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon,¹²⁴ directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apamæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without control through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres.¹²⁵

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates,¹²⁶ it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals, — of arms, of military engines, and of corn.¹²⁷ It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles¹²⁸ of the city, which they had devoted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhyndacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream and

stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt.[129](#) Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat.[130](#) But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly.[131](#)

When we are informed that the third fleet, equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships,[132](#) our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured by the judicious Strabo,[133](#) that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm that fifteen thousand warriors at the most embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the straits, they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them; till a favourable wind, springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake, of the Propontis.[134](#) Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago or the Ægean Sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens,[135](#) which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls fallen to decay since the time of Sylla.[136](#) The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and the arts. But, while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the licence of plunder and intemperance,[137](#) their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who, flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country.[138](#)

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the Northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece.[139](#) Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms; and his presence seems to have checked the ardour, and to have divided the

strength, of the enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, accepted an honourable capitulation, entered with a large body of his countrymen into the service of Rome, and was invested with the ornaments of the consular dignity, which had never before been profaned by the hands of a barbarian.¹⁴⁰ Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke into Mæsia, with a design of forcing their way over the Danube to their settlements in the Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved inevitable destruction, if the discord of the Roman generals had not opened to the barbarians the means of an escape.¹⁴¹ The small remainder of this destroying host returned on board their vessels, and, measuring back their way through the Hellespont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immortalised by Homer, will probably survive the memory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they found themselves in safety within the basin of the Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near the foot of Mount Hæmus, and, after all their toils, indulged themselves in the use of those pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained of the voyage was a short and easy navigation.¹⁴² Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But, as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In these expeditions the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are sometimes distinguished and sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and, as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixed multitude.¹⁴³

In the general calamities of mankind the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven repeated misfortunes,¹⁴⁴ was finally burnt by the Goths in their third naval invasion. The arts of Greece and the wealth of Asia had conspired to erect that sacred and magnificent structure. It was supported by an hundred and twenty-seven marble columns of the Ionic order; they were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had, perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of the place the birth of the divine children of Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons.¹⁴⁵ Yet the length of the temple of Ephesus was only four hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds the measure of the church of St. Peter's at Rome.¹⁴⁶ In the other dimensions, it was still more inferior to that sublime production of modern architecture. The spreading arms of a Christian cross require a much greater breadth than the oblong temples of the Pagans; and the boldest artists of antiquity would have been startled at the proposal of raising in the air a dome of the size and proportions of the Pantheon. The temple of Diana was, however, admired as one of the wonders of the world. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity, and enriched its splendour.¹⁴⁷ But the rude savages of the Baltic were

destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition.[148](#)

Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told that in the sack of Athens the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design, by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms.[149](#) The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

IV. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of the many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes, king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his life and his independence. He defended himself by the natural strength of his country; by the perpetual resort of fugitives and malcontents; by the alliance of the Romans; and, above all, by his own courage. Invincible in arms, during a thirty years' war, he was assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor, king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Armenia, who asserted the freedom and dignity of the crown, implored the protection of Rome in favour of Tiridates, the lawful heir. But the son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were at a distance, and the Persian monarch advanced towards the frontier at the head of an irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity of a servant, and Armenia continued above twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the great monarchy of Persia.[150](#) Elated with this easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged the strong garrisons of Carrhæ and Nisibis to surrender, and spread devastation and terror on either side of the Euphrates.

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished, and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of that great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortunes on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his Prætorian prefect.[151](#) That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies, of Rome.[152](#) By his weak or wicked counsels the Imperial army was betrayed into a situation where valour and military skill were equally unavailing.[153](#) The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut

their way through the Persian host was repulsed with great slaughter; [154](#) and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and, detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of entrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms. [155](#) In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army. [156](#)

The Imperial slave was eager to secure the favour of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious historian, [157](#) the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword or led away into captivity. [158](#) The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaster. [159](#) But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of Mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader whose principal force consisted in his cavalry would have been engaged in a very unequal combat: and Sapor was admitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, not so much by the commission of the emperor as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty. [160](#) Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the same prince who, in Armenia, had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, showed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave

behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces.[161](#)

At a time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings — a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. “Who is this Odenathus” (said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the presents should be cast into the Euphrates), “that he thus insolently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of mitigating his punishment, let him fall prostrate before the foot of our throne, with his hands bound behind his back. Should he hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole race, and on his country.”[162](#) The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor; but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria,[163](#) and the tents of the desert,[164](#) he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and, what was dearer than any treasure, several of the women of the Great King; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion.[165](#) By this exploit Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortunes. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, reproaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains, but invested with the Imperial purple, was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that, whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.[166](#) The tale is moral and pathetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor are manifest forgeries;[167](#) nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure, and avowed indifference. “I knew that my father was a mortal,” said he, “and, since he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am satisfied.” Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.[168](#) It is difficult to paint

the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted his lively genius enabled him to succeed; and, as his genius was destitute of judgment, he attempted every art, except the important ones of war and government. He was a master of several curious but useless sciences, a ready orator, an elegant poet,[169](#) a skilful gardener, an excellent cook, and most contemptible prince. When the great emergencies of the state required his presence and attention, he was engaged in conversation with the philosopher Plotinus,[170](#) wasting his time in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His profuse magnificence insulted the general poverty; the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a deeper sense of the public disgrace.[171](#) The repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and rebellions, he received with a careless smile; and singling out, with affected contempt, some particular production of the lost province, he carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined, unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt, and Arras cloth from Gaul? There were, however, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus when, exasperated by some recent injury, he suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the cruel tyrant; till, satiated with blood or fatigued by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural mildness and indolence of his character.[172](#)

At a time when the reins of government were held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every province of the empire, against the son of Valerian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers of the Augustan History to select that celebrated number, which has been gradually received into a popular appellation.[173](#) But in every light the parallel is idle and defective. What resemblance can we discover between a council of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the Imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne: Cyriades, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia in the East; in Gaul and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus,[174](#) Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation.[175](#)

It is sufficiently known that the odious appellation of *Tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme power, without any reference to the abuse of it. Several of the pretenders who raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the

favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals who assumed the title of Augustus were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the armourer Marius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty.¹⁷⁶ His mean and recent trade cast, indeed, an air of ridicule on his elevation; but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature; in a general state of war military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphurnius Piso,¹⁷⁷ who, by female alliances, claimed a right of exhibiting in his house the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey.¹⁷⁸ His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and, of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Cæsars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and, although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel.¹⁷⁹

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the father, whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet, if we examine with candour the conduct of these usurpers, it will appear that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus: they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them to secure a short enjoyment of the empire, and rather to try the fortune of war than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. "You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, "you have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched emperor."¹⁸⁰

The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs received, however, such honours as the flattery of their respective armies and provinces could bestow; but their claim, founded on rebellion,

could never obtain the sanction of law or history. Italy, Rome, and the senate constantly adhered to the cause of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended indeed to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to entrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia. [181](#)

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have amused an indifferent philosopher, were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops by an immense donative drawn from the bowels of the exhausted people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. “It is not enough,” says that soft but inhuman prince, “that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms: the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropt an expression, who has entertained a thought, against me, against *me*, the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes. [182](#) Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor: tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings.” [183](#) Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels, the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every invader. The bravest usurpers were compelled by the perplexity of their situation to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy. [184](#)

Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as the barrenness of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There still remain some particular facts: I. The disorders of Sicily; II. The tumults of Alexandria; and III. The rebellion of the Isaurians — which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

I. Whenever numerous troops of banditti, multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding, the justice of their country, we may safely infer that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the

disarmed province have supported an usurper. The sufferings of that once flourishing and still fertile island were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.¹⁸⁵ Devastations, of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

II. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles;¹⁸⁶ it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves.¹⁸⁷ The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again in manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry, nor did even the blind or the lame want occupations suited to their condition.¹⁸⁸ But the people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedence in the public baths, or even a religious dispute,¹⁸⁹ were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable.¹⁹⁰ After the captivity of Valerian and the indolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years.¹⁹¹ All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and museum, the residence of the kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described above a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of a dreary solitude.¹⁹²

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide-extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile valleys¹⁹³ supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness by surrounding the hostile and independent spot with a strong chain of fortifications,¹⁹⁴ which often proved

insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring pirates against whom the republic had once been obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey. [195](#)

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies fictitious or exaggerated. [196](#) But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must however have contributed to the furious plague which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the hands of the barbarians were entirely depopulated. [197](#)

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melancholy calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus. [198](#) Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves that above half the people of Alexandria had perished; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect that war, pestilence, and famine had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species. [199](#)

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CHAPTER XI

Reign of Claudius — Defeat of the Goths — Victories, triumph, and death of Aurelian

Under the deplorable reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, the empire was oppressed and almost destroyed by the soldiers, the tyrants, and the barbarians. It was saved by a series of great princes, who derived their obscure origin from the martial provinces of Illyricum. Within a period of about thirty years, Claudius, Aurelian, Probus, Diocletian, and his colleagues triumphed over the foreign and domestic enemies of the state, re-established, with the military discipline, the strength of the frontiers, and deserved the glorious title of Restorers of the Roman world.

The removal of an effeminate tyrant made way for a succession of heroes. The indignation of the people imputed all their calamities to Gallienus, and the far greater part were, indeed, the consequence of his dissolute manners and careless administration. He was even destitute of a sense of honour, which so frequently supplies the absence of public virtue; and, as long as he was permitted to enjoy the possession of Italy, a victory of the barbarians, the loss of a province, or the rebellion of a general seldom disturbed the tranquil course of his pleasures. At length, a considerable army, stationed on the Upper Danube, invested with the Imperial purple their leader Aureolus; who, disdainful of a confined and barren reign over the mountains of Rhætia, passed the Alps, occupied Milan, threatened Rome, and challenged Gallienus to dispute in the field the sovereignty of Italy. The emperor, provoked by the insult, and alarmed by the instant danger, suddenly exerted that latent vigour which sometimes broke through the indolence of his temper. Forcing himself from the luxury of the palace, he appeared in arms at the head of his legions, and advanced beyond the Po to encounter his competitor. The corrupted name of Pontirolo¹ still preserves the memory of a bridge over the Adda, which, during the action, must have proved an object of the utmost importance to both armies. The Rhætian usurper, after receiving a total defeat and a dangerous wound, retired into Milan. The siege of that great city was immediately formed; the walls were battered with every engine in use among the ancients; and Aureolus, doubtful of his internal strength, and hopeless of foreign succours, already anticipated the fatal consequences of unsuccessful rebellion.

His last resource was an attempt to seduce the loyalty of the besiegers. He scattered libels through their camp, inviting the troops to desert an unworthy master, who sacrificed the public happiness to his luxury, and the lives of his most valuable subjects to the slightest suspicions. The arts of Aureolus diffused fears and discontent among the principal officers of his rival. A conspiracy was formed by Heraclianus, the Prætorian prefect, by Marcian, a general of rank and reputation, and by Cecrops,² who commanded a numerous body of Dalmatian guards. The death of Gallienus was resolved, and, notwithstanding their desire of first terminating the siege of Milan, the extreme danger which accompanied every moment's delay obliged them to hasten the execution of their daring purpose. At a late hour of the night, but while the emperor still protracted the pleasures of the table, an alarm was suddenly given that Aureolus, at the head of all his forces, had made a desperate sally from the town; Gallienus, who

was never deficient in personal bravery, started from his silken couch, and, without allowing himself time either to put on his armour or to assemble his guards, he mounted on horseback, and rode full speed towards the supposed place of the attack. Encompassed by his declared or concealed enemies, he soon, amidst the nocturnal tumult, received a mortal dart from an uncertain hand. Before he expired, a patriotic sentiment rising in the mind of Gallienus induced him to name a deserving successor, and it was his last request that the Imperial ornaments should be delivered to Claudius, who then commanded a detached army in the neighbourhood of Pavia. The report at least was diligently propagated, and the order cheerfully obeyed by the conspirators, who had already agreed to place Claudius on the throne. On the first news of the emperor's death, the troops expressed some suspicion and resentment, till the one was removed and the other assuaged by a donative of twenty pieces of gold to each soldier. They then ratified the election, and acknowledged the merit, of their new sovereign.³

The obscurity which covered the origin of Claudius, though it was afterwards embellished by some flattering fictions,⁴ sufficiently betrays the meanness of his birth. We can only discover that he was a native of one of the provinces bordering on the Danube; that his youth was spent in arms, and that his modest valour attracted the favour and confidence of Decius. The senate and people already considered him as an excellent officer, equal to the most important trusts; and censured the inattention of Valerian, who suffered him to remain in the subordinate station of a tribune. But it was not long before that emperor distinguished the merit of Claudius, by declaring him general and chief of the Illyrian frontier, with the command of all the troops in Thrace, Mæsia, Dacia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia, the appointments of the prefect of Egypt, the establishment of the proconsul of Africa, and the sure prospect of the consulship. By his victories over the Goths, he deserved from the senate the honour of a statue and excited the jealous apprehensions of Gallienus. It was impossible that a soldier could esteem so dissolute a sovereign, nor is it easy to conceal a just contempt. Some unguarded expressions which dropped from Claudius were officiously transmitted to the royal ear. The emperor's answer to an officer of confidence describes in very lively colours his own character and that of the times. "There is not anything capable of giving me more serious concern, than the intelligence contained in your last despatch,⁵ that some malicious suggestions have indisposed towards us the mind of our friend and parent, Claudius. As you regard your allegiance, use every means to appease his resentment, but conduct your negotiation with secrecy; let it not reach the knowledge of the Dacian troops; they are already provoked, and it might inflame their fury. I myself have sent him some presents: be it your care that he accept them with pleasure. Above all, let him not suspect that I am made acquainted with his imprudence. The fear of my anger might urge him to desperate counsels."⁶ The presents which accompanied this humble epistle, in which the monarch solicited a reconciliation with his discontented subject, consisted of a considerable sum of money, a splendid wardrobe, and a valuable service of silver and gold plate. By such arts Gallienus softened the indignation, and dispelled the fears, of his Illyrian general; and during the remainder of that reign the formidable sword of Claudius was always drawn in the cause of a master whom he despised. At last, indeed, he received from the conspirators the bloody purple of Gallienus: but he had been absent from their camps and counsels; and, however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly

presume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it.⁷ When Claudius ascended the throne, he was about fifty-four years of age.

The siege of Milan was still continued, and Aureolus soon discovered that the success of his artifices had only raised up a more determined adversary. He attempted to negotiate with Claudius a treaty of alliance and partition. "Tell him," replied the intrepid emperor, "that such proposals should have been made to Gallienus; *he*, perhaps, might have listened to them with patience, and accepted a colleague as despicable as himself."⁸ This stern refusal, and a last unsuccessful effort, obliged Aureolus to yield the city and himself to the discretion of the conqueror. The judgment of the army pronounced him worthy of death, and Claudius, after a feeble resistance, consented to the execution of the sentence. Nor was the zeal of the senate less ardent in the cause of their new sovereign. They ratified, perhaps with a sincere transport of zeal, the election of Claudius; and, as his predecessor had shown himself the personal enemy of their order, they exercised, under the name of justice, a severe revenge against his friends and family. The senate was permitted to discharge the ungrateful office of punishment, and the emperor reserved for himself the pleasure and merit of obtaining by his intercession a general act of indemnity.⁹

Such ostentatious clemency discovers less of the real character of Claudius than a trifling circumstance in which he seems to have consulted only the dictates of his heart. The frequent rebellions of the provinces had involved almost every person in the guilt of treason, almost every estate in the case of confiscation; and Gallienus often displayed his liberality by distributing among his officers the property of his subjects. On the accession of Claudius, an old woman threw herself at his feet, and complained that a general of the late emperor had obtained an arbitrary grant of her patrimony. This general was Claudius himself, who had not entirely escaped the contagion of the times. The emperor blushed at the reproach, but deserved the confidence which she had reposed in his equity. The confession of his fault was accompanied with immediate and ample restitution.¹⁰

In the arduous task which Claudius had undertaken, of restoring the empire to its ancient splendour, it was first necessary to revive among his troops a sense of order and obedience. With the authority of a veteran commander, he represented to them that the relaxation of discipline had introduced a long train of disorders, the effects of which were at length experienced by the soldiers themselves; that a people ruined by oppression, and indolent from despair, could no longer supply a numerous army with the means of luxury, or even of subsistence; that the danger of each individual had increased with the despotism of the military order, since princes who tremble on the throne will guard their safety by the instant sacrifice of every obnoxious subject. The emperor expatiated on the mischiefs of a lawless caprice which the soldiers could only gratify at the expense of their own blood, as their seditious elections had so frequently been followed by civil wars, which consumed the flower of the legions either in the field of battle or in the cruel abuse of victory. He painted in the most lively colours the exhausted state of the treasury, the desolation of the provinces, the disgrace of the Roman name, and the insolent triumph of rapacious barbarians. It was against those barbarians, he declared, that the intended to point the first effort of their arms. Tetricus might reign for a while over the West, and even Zenobia might

preserve the dominion of the East.¹¹ These usurpers were his personal adversaries; nor could he think of indulging any private resentment till he had saved an empire, whose impending ruin would, unless it was timely prevented, crush both the army and the people.

The various nations of Germany and Sarmatia¹² who fought under the Gothic standard had already collected an armament more formidable than any which had yet issued from the Euxine. On the banks of the Dniester, one of the great rivers that discharge themselves into that sea, they constructed a fleet of two thousand, or even of six thousand vessels;¹³ numbers which, however incredible they may seem, would have been insufficient to transport their pretended army of three hundred and twenty thousand barbarians. Whatever might be the real strength of the Goths, the vigour and success of the expedition were not adequate to the greatness of the preparations. In their passage through the Bosphorus, the unskilful pilots were overpowered by the violence of the current; and while the multitude of their ships were crowded in a narrow channel, many were dashed against each other, or against the shore. The barbarians made several descents on the coasts both of Europe and Asia; but the open country was already plundered, and they were repulsed with shame and loss from the fortified cities which they assaulted. A spirit of discouragement and division arose in the fleet, and some of their chiefs sailed away towards the islands of Crete and Cyprus; but the main body, pursuing a more steady course, anchored at length near the foot of Mount Athos, and assaulted the city of Thessalonica, the wealthy capital of all the Macedonian provinces. Their attacks, in which they displayed a fierce but artless bravery, were soon interrupted by the rapid approach of Claudius, hastening to a scene of action that deserved the presence of a warlike prince at the head of the remaining powers of the empire. Impatient for battle, the Goths immediately broke up their camp, relinquished the siege of Thessalonica, left their navy at the foot of Mount Athos, traversed the hills of Macedonia, and pressed forwards to engage the last defence of Italy.

We still possess an original letter addressed by Claudius to the senate and people on this memorable occasion. “Conscript fathers,” says the emperor, “know that three hundred and twenty thousand Goths have invaded the Roman territory. If I vanquish them, your gratitude will reward my services. Should I fall, remember that I am the successor of Gallienus. The whole republic is fatigued and exhausted. We shall fight after Valerian, after Ingenuus, Regillianus, Lollianus, Posthumus, Celsus, and a thousand others, whom a just contempt for Gallienus provoked into rebellion. We are in want of darts, of spears, and of shields. The strength of the empire, Gaul and Spain, are usurped by Tetricus, and we blush to acknowledge that the archers of the East serve under the banners of Zenobia. Whatever we shall perform will be sufficiently great.”¹⁴ The melancholy firmness of this epistle announces a hero careless of his fate, conscious of his danger, but still deriving a well-grounded hope from the resources of his own mind.

The event surpassed his own expectations and those of the world. By the most signal victories he delivered the empire from this host of barbarians, and was distinguished by posterity under the glorious appellation of the Gothic Claudius. The imperfect historians of an irregular war¹⁵ do not enable us to describe the order and

circumstances of his exploits; but, if we could be indulged in the illusion, we might distribute into three acts this memorable tragedy. I. The decisive battle was fought near Naissus, a city of Dardania. The legions at first gave way, oppressed by numbers, and dismayed by misfortunes. Their ruin was inevitable, had not the abilities of their emperor prepared a seasonable relief. A large detachment, rising out of the secret and difficult passes of the mountains, which, by his order, they had occupied, suddenly assailed the rear of the victorious Goths. The favourable instant was improved by the activity of Claudius. He revived the courage of his troops, restored their ranks, and pressed the barbarians on every side. Fifty thousand men are reported to have been slain in the battle of Naissus. Several large bodies of barbarians, covering their retreat with a movable fortification of waggons, retired, or rather escaped, from the field of slaughter. II. We may presume that some insurmountable difficulty, the fatigue, perhaps, or the disobedience, of the conquerors, prevented Claudius from completing in one day the destruction of the Goths. The war was diffused over the provinces of Mæsia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and its operations drawn out into a variety of marches, surprises, and tumultuary engagements, as well by sea as by land. When the Romans suffered any loss, it was commonly occasioned by their own cowardice or rashness; but the superior talents of the emperor, his perfect knowledge of the country, and his judicious choice of measures as well as officers, assured on most occasions the success of his arms. The immense booty, the fruit of so many victories, consisted for the greater part of cattle and slaves. A select body of the Gothic youth was received among the Imperial troops; the remainder was sold into servitude; and so considerable was the number of female captives, that every soldier obtained to his share two or three women. A circumstance from which we may conclude that the invaders entertained some designs of settlement as well as of plunder; since even in a naval expedition they were accompanied by their families. III. The loss of their fleet, which was either taken or sunk, had intercepted the retreat of the Goths. A vast circle of Roman posts, distributed with skill, supported with firmness, and gradually closing towards a common centre, forced the barbarians into the most inaccessible parts of Mount Hæmus, where they found a safe refuge, but a very scanty subsistence. During the course of a rigorous winter, in which they were besieged by the emperor's troops, famine and pestilence, desertion and the sword, continually diminished the imprisoned multitude. On the return of spring, nothing appeared in arms except a hardy and desperate band, the remnant of that mighty host which had embarked at the mouth of the Dniester.

The pestilence which swept away such numbers of the barbarians at length proved fatal to their conqueror. After a short but glorious reign of two years, Claudius expired at Sirmium, amidst the tears and acclamations of his subjects. In his last illness, he convened the principal officers of the state and army, and in their presence recommended Aurelian,¹⁶ one of his generals,¹⁷ as the most deserving of the throne, and the best qualified to execute the great design which he himself had been permitted only to undertake. The virtues of Claudius, his valour, affability, justice, and temperance, his love of fame and of his country, place him in that short list of emperors who added lustre to the Roman purple. Those virtues, however, were celebrated with peculiar zeal and complacency by the courtly writers of the age of Constantine, who was the great-grandson of Crispus, the elder brother of Claudius. The voice of flattery was soon taught to repeat that the gods, who so hastily had

snatched Claudius from the earth, rewarded his merit and piety by the perpetual establishment of the empire in his family.[18](#)

Notwithstanding these oracles, the greatness of the Flavian family (a name which it had pleased them to assume) was deferred above twenty years, and the elevation of Claudius occasioned the immediate ruin of his brother Quintilius, who possessed not sufficient moderation or courage to descend into the private station to which the patriotism of the late emperor had condemned him. Without delay or reflection, he assumed the purple at Aquileia, where he commanded a considerable force; and, though his reign lasted only seventeen days, he had time to obtain the sanction of the senate, and to experience a mutiny of the troops. As soon as he was informed that the great army of the Danube had invested the well-known valour of Aurelian with Imperial power, he sunk under the fame and merit of his rival; and, ordering his veins to be opened, prudently withdrew himself from the unequal contest.[19](#)

The general design of this work will not permit us minutely to relate the actions of every emperor after he ascended the throne, much less to deduce the various fortunes of his private life. We shall only observe, that the father of Aurelian was a peasant of the territory of Sirmium, who occupied a small farm, the property of Aurelius, a rich senator. His warlike son enlisted in the troops as a common soldier, successively rose to the rank of a centurion, a tribune, the prefect of a legion, the inspector of the camp,[20](#) the general, or, as it was then called, the duke of a frontier; and at length, during the Gothic war, exercised the important office of commander-in-chief of the cavalry. In every station he distinguished himself by matchless valour,[21](#) rigid discipline, and successful conduct. He was invested with the consulship by the emperor Valerian, who styles him, in the pompous language of that age, the deliverer of Illyricum, the restorer of Gaul, and the rival of the Scipios. At the recommendation of Valerian, a senator of the highest rank and merit, Ulpian Crinitus, whose blood was derived from the same source as that of Trajan, adopted the Pannonian peasant, gave him his daughter in marriage, and relieved with his ample fortune the honourable poverty which Aurelian had preserved inviolate.[22](#)

The reign of Aurelian lasted only four years and about nine months; but every instant of that short period was filled by some memorable achievement. He put an end to the Gothic war, chastised the Germans who invaded Italy, recovered Gaul, Spain, and Britain out of the hands of Tetricus, and destroyed the proud monarchy which Zenobia had erected in the East on the ruins of the afflicted empire.

It was the rigid attention of Aurelian even to the minutest articles of discipline which bestowed such uninterrupted success on his arms. His military regulations are contained in a very concise epistle to one of his inferior officers, who is commanded to enforce them, as he wishes to become a tribune, or as he is desirous to live. Gaming, drinking, and the arts of divination were severely prohibited. Aurelian expected that his soldiers should be modest, frugal, and laborious; that their armour should be constantly kept bright, their weapons sharp, their clothing and horses ready for immediate service; that they should live in their quarters with chastity and sobriety, without damaging the corn fields, without stealing even a sheep, a fowl or a bunch of grapes, without exacting from their landlords either salt, or oil, or wood.

“The public allowance,” continues the emperor, “is sufficient for their support; their wealth should be collected from the spoil of the enemy, not from the tears of the provincials.”²³ A single instance will serve to display the rigour, and even cruelty, of Aurelian. One of the soldiers had seduced the wife of his host. The guilty wretch was fastened to two trees forcibly drawn towards each other, and his limbs were torn asunder by their sudden separation. A few such examples impressed a salutary consternation. The punishments of Aurelian were terrible; but he had seldom occasion to punish more than once the same offence. His own conduct gave a sanction to his laws, and the seditious legions dreaded a chief who had learned to obey, and who was worthy to command.

The death of Claudius had revived the fainting spirit of the Goths. The troops which guarded the passes of Mount Hæmus, and the banks of the Danube, had been drawn away by the apprehension of a civil war; and it seems probable that the remaining body of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes embraced the favourable opportunity, abandoned their settlements of the Ukraine, traversed the rivers, and swelled with new multitudes the destroying host of their countrymen. Their united numbers were at length encountered by Aurelian, and the bloody and doubtful conflict ended only with the approach of night.²⁴ Exhausted by so many calamities which they had mutually endured and inflicted during a twenty years’ war, the Goths and the Romans consented to a lasting and beneficial treaty. It was earnestly solicited by the barbarians, and cheerfully ratified by the legions, to whose suffrage the prudence of Aurelian referred the decision of that important question. The Gothic nation engaged to supply the armies of Rome with a body of two thousand auxiliaries, consisting entirely of cavalry, and stipulated in return an undisturbed retreat, with a regular market as far as the Danube, provided by the emperor’s care, but at their own expense. The treaty was observed with such religious fidelity, that, when a party of five hundred men straggled from the camp in quest of plunder, the king or general of the barbarians commanded that the guilty leader should be apprehended and shot to death with darts, as a victim devoted to the sanctity of their engagements. It is, however, not unlikely that the precaution of Aurelian, who had exacted as hostages the sons and daughters of the Gothic chiefs, contributed something to this pacific temper. The youths he trained in the exercise of arms, and near his own person; to the damsels he gave a liberal and Roman education, and, by bestowing them in marriage on some of his principal officers, gradually introduced between the two nations the closest and most endearing connections.²⁵

But the most important condition of peace was understood rather than expressed in the treaty. Aurelian withdrew the Roman forces from Dacia, and tacitly relinquished that great province to the Goths and Vandals.²⁶ His manly judgment convinced him of the solid advantages, and taught him to despise the seeming disgrace, of thus contracting the frontiers of the monarchy. The Dacian subjects, removed from those distant possessions which they were unable to cultivate or defend, added strength and populousness to the southern side of the Danube. A fertile territory, which the repetition of barbarous inroads had changed into a desert, was yielded to their industry, and a new province of Dacia²⁷ still preserved the memory of Trajan’s conquests. The old country of that name detained, however, a considerable number of its inhabitants, who dreaded exile more than a Gothic master.²⁸ These degenerate

Romans continued to serve the empire, whose allegiance they had renounced, by introducing among their conquerors the first notions of agriculture, the useful arts, and the conveniences of civilised life. An intercourse of commerce and language was gradually established between the opposite banks of the Danube; and, after Dacia became an independent state, it often proved the firmest barrier of the empire against the invasions of the savages of the North. A sense of interest attached these more settled barbarians to the alliance of Rome, and a permanent interest very frequently ripens into sincere and useful friendship. This various colony, which filled the ancient province and was insensibly blended into one great people, still acknowledged the superior renown and authority of the Gothic tribe, and claimed the fancied honour of a Scandinavian origin. At the same time the lucky though accidental resemblance of the name of Getæ, infused among the credulous Goths a vain persuasion that, in a remote age, their own ancestors, already seated in the Dacian provinces, had received the instructions of Zamolxis, and checked the victorious arms of Sesostri and Darius.²⁹

While the vigorous and moderate conduct of Aurelian restored the Illyrian frontier, the nation of the Alemanni³⁰ violated the conditions of peace, which either Gallienus had purchased, or Claudius had imposed, and, inflamed by their impatient youth, suddenly flew to arms. Forty thousand horse appeared in the field,³¹ and the numbers of the infantry doubled those of the cavalry.³² The first objects of their avarice were a few cities of the Rhætian frontier; but, their hopes soon rising with success, the rapid march of the Alemanni traced a line of devastation from the Danube to the Po.³³

The emperor was almost at the same time informed of the irruption, and of the retreat, of the barbarians. Collecting an active body of troops, he marched with silence and celerity along the skirts of the Hercynian forest; and the Alemanni, laden with the spoils of Italy, arrived at the Danube, without suspecting that, on the opposite bank, and in an advantageous post, a Roman army lay concealed and prepared to intercept their return. Aurelian indulged the fatal security of the barbarians, and permitted about half their forces to pass the river without disturbance and without precaution. Their situation and astonishment gave him an easy victory; his skilful conduct improved the advantage. Disposing the legions in a semicircular form, he advanced the two horns of the crescent across the Danube, and, wheeling them on a sudden towards the centre, enclosed the rear of the German host. The dismayed barbarians, on whatsoever side they cast their eyes, beheld with despair a wasted country, a deep and rapid stream, a victorious and implacable enemy.

Reduced to this distressed condition, the Alemanni no longer disdained to sue for peace.³⁴ Aurelian received their ambassadors at the head of his camp, and with every circumstance of martial pomp that could display the greatness and discipline of Rome. The legions stood to their arms in well-ordered ranks and awful silence. The principal commanders, distinguished by the ensigns of their rank, appeared on horseback on either side of the Imperial throne. Behind the throne, the consecrated images of the emperor and his predecessors,³⁵ the golden eagles, and the various titles of the legions, engraved in letters of gold, were exalted in the air on lofty pikes covered with silver. When Aurelian assumed his seat, his manly grace and majestic figure³⁶ taught the barbarians to revere the person as well as the purple of their conqueror. The ambassadors fell prostrate on the ground in silence. They were commanded to rise,

and permitted to speak. By the assistance of interpreters they extenuated their perfidy, magnified their exploits, expatiated on the vicissitudes of fortune and the advantages of peace, and, with an ill-timed confidence, demanded a large subsidy, as the price of the alliance which they offered to the Romans. The answer of the emperor was stern and imperious. He treated their offer with contempt, and their demand with indignation; reproached the barbarians, that they were as ignorant of the arts of war as of the laws of peace; and finally dismissed them with the choice only of submitting to his unconditioned mercy, or awaiting the utmost severity of his resentment.³⁷ Aurelian had resigned a distant province to the Goths; but it was dangerous to trust or to pardon these perfidious barbarians, whose formidable power kept Italy itself in perpetual alarms.

Immediately after this conference it should seem that some unexpected emergency required the emperor's presence in Pannonia. He devolved on his lieutenants the care of finishing the destruction of the Alemanni, either by the sword, or by the surer operation of famine. But an active despair has often triumphed over the indolent assurance of success. The barbarians, finding it impossible to traverse the Danube and the Roman camp, broke through the posts in their rear, which were more feebly or less carefully guarded; and with incredible diligence, but by a different road, returned towards the mountains of Italy.³⁸ Aurelian, who considered the war as totally extinguished, received the mortifying intelligence of the escape of the Alemanni, and of the ravage which they already committed in the territory of Milan. The legions were commanded to follow, with as much expedition as those heavy bodies were capable of exerting, the rapid flight of an enemy whose infantry and cavalry moved with almost equal swiftness. A few days afterwards the emperor himself marched to the relief of Italy, at the head of a chosen body of auxiliaries (among whom were the hostages and cavalry of the Vandals), and of all the Prætorian guards who had served in the wars on the Danube.³⁹

As the light troops of the Alemanni had spread themselves from the Alps to the Apennine, the incessant vigilance of Aurelian and his officers was exercised in the discovery, the attack, and the pursuit of the numerous detachments. Notwithstanding this desultory war, three considerable battles are mentioned, in which the principal force of both armies was obstinately engaged.⁴⁰ The success was various. In the first, fought near Placentia, the Romans received so severe a blow, that, according to the expression of a writer extremely partial to Aurelian, the immediate dissolution of the empire was apprehended.⁴¹ The crafty barbarians, who had lined the woods, suddenly attacked the legions in the dusk of the evening, and, it is most probable, after the fatigue and disorder of a long march. The fury of their charge was irresistible; but at length, after a dreadful slaughter, the patient firmness of the emperor rallied his troops, and restored, in some degree, the honour of his arms. The second battle was fought near Fano in Umbria; on the spot which, five hundred years before, had been fatal to the brother of Hannibal.⁴² Thus far the successful Germans had advanced along the Æmilian and Flaminian way, with a design of sacking the defenceless mistress of the world. But Aurelian, who, watchful for the safety of Rome, still hung on their rear, found in this place the decisive moment of giving them a total and irretrievable defeat.⁴³ The flying remnant of their host was exterminated in a third and last battle near Pavia; and Italy was delivered from the inroads of the Alemanni.

Fear has been the original parent of superstition, and every new calamity urges trembling mortals to deprecate the wrath of their invisible enemies. Though the best hope of the republic was in the valour and conduct of Aurelian, yet such was the public consternation, when the barbarians were hourly expected at the gates of Rome, that, by a decree of the senate, the Sibylline books were consulted. Even the emperor himself, from a motive either of religion or of policy, recommended the salutary measure, chided the tardiness of the senate,[44](#) and offered to supply whatever expense, whatever animals, whatever captives of any nation, the gods should require. Notwithstanding this liberal offer, it does not appear that any human victims expiated with their blood the sins of the Roman people. The Sibylline books enjoined ceremonies of a more harmless nature, processions of priests in white robes, attended by a chorus of youths and virgins; lustrations of the city and adjacent country; and sacrifices, whose powerful influence disabled the barbarians from passing the mystic ground on which they had been celebrated. However puerile in themselves, these superstitious arts were subservient to the success of the war; and if, in the decisive battle of Fano, the Alemanni fancied they saw an army of spectres combating on the side of Aurelian, he received a real and effectual aid from this imaginary reinforcement.[45](#)

But, whatever confidence might be placed in ideal ramparts, the experience of the past, and the dread of the future, induced the Romans to construct fortifications of a grosser and more substantial kind. The seven hills of Rome had been surrounded by the successors of Romulus with an ancient wall of more than thirteen miles.[46](#) The vast enclosure may seem disproportioned to the strength and numbers of the infant state. But it was necessary to secure an ample extent of pasture and arable land against the frequent and sudden incursions of the tribes of Latium, the perpetual enemies of the republic. With the progress of Roman greatness, the city and its inhabitants gradually increased, filled up the vacant space, pierced through the useless walls, covered the field of Mars, and, on every side, followed the public highways in long and beautiful suburbs.[47](#) The extent of the new walls, erected by Aurelian, and finished in the reign of Probus, was magnified by popular estimation to near fifty;[48](#) but is reduced by accurate measurement to about twenty-one miles.[49](#) It was a great but a melancholy labour, since the defence of the capital betrayed the decline of the monarchy. The Romans of a more prosperous age, who trusted to the arms of the legions the safety of the frontier camps,[50](#) were very far from entertaining a suspicion that it would ever become necessary to fortify the seat of empire against the inroads of the barbarians.[51](#)

The victory of Claudius over the Goths, and the success of Aurelian against the Alemanni, had already restored to the arms of Rome their ancient superiority over the barbarous nations of the North. To chastise domestic tyrants, and to reunite the dismembered parts of the empire, was a task reserved for the latter of those warlike emperors. Though he was acknowledged by the senate and people, the frontiers of Italy, Africa, Illyricum, and Thrace, confined the limits of his reign. Gaul, Spain, and Britain, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor were still possessed by two rebels, who alone, out of so numerous a list, had hitherto escaped the dangers of their situation; and, to complete the ignominy of Rome, these rival thrones had been usurped by women.

A rapid succession of monarchs had arisen and fallen in the provinces of Gaul. The rigid virtues of Posthumus served only to hasten his destruction. After suppressing a competitor, who had assumed the purple at Mentz, he refused to gratify his troops with the plunder of the rebellious city; and, in the seventh year of his reign, became the victim of their disappointed avarice.⁵² The death of Victorinus, his friend and associate, was occasioned by a less worthy cause. The shining accomplishments⁵³ of that prince were stained by a licentious passion, which he indulged in acts of violence, with too little regard to the laws of society, or even to those of love.⁵⁴ He was slain at Cologne, by a conspiracy of jealous husbands, whose revenge would have appeared more justifiable, had they spared the innocence of his son. After the murder of so many valiant princes, it is somewhat remarkable that a female for a long time controlled the fierce legions of Gaul, and still more singular that she was the mother of the unfortunate Victorinus. The arts and treasures of Victoria enabled her successfully to place Marius and Tetricus on the throne, and to reign with a manly vigour under the name of those dependent emperors. Money of copper, of silver, and of gold was coined in her name; she assumed the titles of Augusta and Mother of the Camps: her power ended only with her life; but her life was perhaps shortened by the ingratitude of Tetricus.⁵⁵

When, at the instigation of his ambitious patroness, Tetricus⁵⁶ assumed the ensigns of royalty, he was governor of the peaceful province of Aquitaine, an employment suited to his character and education. He reigned four or five years over Gaul, Spain, and Britain, the slave and sovereign of a licentious army, whom he dreaded and by whom he was despised. The valour and fortune of Aurelian at length opened the prospect of a deliverance. He ventured to disclose his melancholy situation, and conjured the emperor to hasten to the relief of his unhappy rival. Had this secret correspondence reached the ears of the soldiers, it would most probably have cost Tetricus his life; nor could he resign the sceptre of the West without committing an act of treason against himself. He affected the appearances of a civil war, led his forces into the field against Aurelian, posted them in the most disadvantageous manner, betrayed his own counsels to the enemy, and with a few chosen friends deserted in the beginning of the action. The rebel legions, though disordered and dismayed by the unexpected treachery of their chief, defended themselves with a desperate valour, till they were cut in pieces almost to a man, in this bloody and memorable battle, which was fought near Chalons in Champagne.⁵⁷ The retreat of the irregular auxiliaries, Franks and Batavians,⁵⁸ whom the conqueror soon compelled or persuaded to repass the Rhine, restored the general tranquillity, and the power of Aurelian was acknowledged from the wall of Antoninus to the columns of Hercules.

As early as the reign of Claudius, the city of Autun, alone and unassisted, had ventured to declare against the legions of Gaul. After a siege of seven months, they stormed and plundered that unfortunate city, already wasted by famine.⁵⁹ Lyons, on the contrary, had resisted with obstinate disaffection the arms of Aurelian. We read of the punishment of Lyons,⁶⁰ but there is not any mention of the rewards of Autun. Such, indeed, is the policy of civil war; severely to remember injuries, and to forget the most important services. Revenge is profitable, gratitude is expensive.

Aurelian had no sooner secured the person and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms against Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the East. Modern Europe has produced several illustrious women who have sustained with glory the weight of empire; nor is our own age destitute of such distinguished characters. But if we except the doubtful achievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia.⁶¹ She claimed her descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her ancestor Cleopatra, and far surpassed that prince in chastity⁶² and valour. Zenobia was esteemed the most lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of dark complexion (for in speaking of a lady these trifles become important). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was strong and harmonious. Her manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own use an epitome of oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the sublime Longinus.

This accomplished woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private station raised himself to the dominion of the East. She soon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus passionately delighted in the exercise of hunting; he pursued with ardour the wild beasts of the desert, lions, panthers, and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amusement was not inferior to his own. She had inured her constitution to fatigue, disdained the use of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horseback in a military habit, and sometimes marched several miles on foot at the head of the troops. The success of Odenathus was in a great measure ascribed to her incomparable prudence and fortitude. Their splendid victories over the Great King, whom they twice pursued as far as the gates of Ctesiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had saved, acknowledged not any other sovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The senate and people of Rome revered a stranger who had avenged their captive emperor, and even the insensible son of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague.

After a successful expedition against the Gothic plunderers of Asia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emesa in Syria. Invincible in war, he was there cut off by domestic treason, and his favourite amusement of hunting was the cause, or at least the occasion, of his death.⁶³ His nephew, Mæonius, presumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and, though admonished of his error, repeated the same insolence. As a monarch and as a sportsman, Odenathus was provoked: took away his horse, a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chastised the rash youth by a short confinement. The offence was soon forgot, but the punishment was remembered; and Mæonius, with a few daring associates, assassinated his uncle in the midst of a great entertainment. Herod, the son of Odenathus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a soft and effeminate temper,⁶⁴ was killed with his father. But Mæonius obtained only the pleasure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had scarcely time to assume the title of Augustus, before he was sacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her husband.⁶⁵

With the assistance of his most faithful friends, she immediately filled the vacant throne, and governed with manly counsels Palmyra, Syria, and the East, above five years. By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the senate had granted him only as a personal distinction; but his martial widow, disdainng both the senate and Gallienus, obliged one of the Roman generals, who was sent against her, to retreat into Europe, with the loss of his army and his reputation.⁶⁶ Instead of the little passions which so frequently perplex a female reign, the steady administration of Zenobia was guided by the most judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her resentment; if it was necessary to punish, she could impose silence on the voice of pity. Her strict economy was accused of avarice; yet on every proper occasion she appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring states of Arabia, Armenia, and Persia dreaded her enmity and solicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenathus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his widow added the inheritance of her ancestors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt. The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content that, while *he* pursued the Gothic war, *she* should assert the dignity of the empire in the East.⁶⁷ The conduct, however, of Zenobia was attended with some ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that she had conceived the design of erecting an independent and hostile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the stately pomp of the courts of Asia, and exacted from her subjects the same adoration that was paid to the successors of Cyrus. She bestowed on her three sons⁶⁸ a Latin education, and often showed them to the troops adorned with the Imperial purple. For herself she reserved the diadem, with the splendid but doubtful title of Queen of the East.

When Aurelian passed over into Asia, against an adversary whose sex alone could render her an object of contempt, his presence restored obedience to the province of Bithynia, already shaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia.⁶⁹ Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the submission of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana, after an obstinate siege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the soldiers: a superstitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the countrymen of Apollonius the philosopher.⁷⁰ Antioch was deserted on his approach, till the emperor, by his salutary edicts, recalled the fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from necessity rather than choice, had been engaged in the service of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildness of such a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and, as far as the gates of Emesa, the wishes of the people seconded the terror of his arms.⁷¹

Zenobia would have ill deserved her reputation, had she indolently permitted the emperor of the West to approach within a hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the East was decided in two great battles; so similar in almost every circumstance that we can scarcely distinguish them from each other, except by observing that the first was fought near Antioch,⁷² and the second near Emesa.⁷³ In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her presence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdas, who had already signalised his military talents by the conquest of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia consisted for the most part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete steel. The Moorish and Illyrian horse of Aurelian were unable to sustain the ponderous charge of their antagonists. They fled in real or

affected disorder, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious pursuit, harassed them by a desultory combat, and at length discomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the meantime, when they had exhausted their quivers, remaining without protection against a closer onset, exposed their naked sides to the swords of the legions. Aurelian had chosen these veteran troops, who were usually stationed on the Upper Danube, and whose valour had been severely tried in the Alemannic war.⁷⁴ After the defeat of Emesa, Zenobia found it impossible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations subject to her empire had joined the standard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the bravest of his generals, to possess himself of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the last resource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous resistance, and declared, with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the last moment of her reign and of her life should be the same.

Amid the barren deserts of Arabia, a few cultivated spots rise like islands out of the sandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or Palmyra, by its signification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm trees which afforded shade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the soil, watered by some invaluable springs, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place possessed of such singular advantages, and situated at a convenient distance,⁷⁵ between the Gulf of Persia and the Mediterranean, was soon frequented by the caravans which conveyed to the nations of Europe a considerable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra insensibly increased into an opulent and independent city, and, connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual benefits of commerce, was suffered to observe an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic sunk into the bosom of Rome, and flourished more than one hundred and fifty years in the subordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inscriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians constructed those temples, palaces, and porticos of Grecian architecture, whose ruins, scattered over an extent of several miles, have deserved the curiosity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia appeared to reflect new splendour on their country, and Palmyra for a while stood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory.⁷⁶

In his march over the sandy desert, between Emesa and Palmyra, the emperor Aurelian was perpetually harassed by the Arabs; nor could he always defend his army, and especially his baggage, from these flying troops of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of surprise, and eluded the slow pursuit of the legions. The siege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who with incessant vigour pressed the attacks in person, was himself wounded with a dart. “The Roman people,” says Aurelian, in an original letter, “speak with contempt of the war which I am waging against a woman. They are ignorant both of the character and of the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons. Every part of the walls is provided with two or three *balistæ*, and artificial fires are thrown from her military engines. The fear of punishment has armed her with a desperate courage. Yet still I trust in the protecting deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favourable to all my

undertakings.”⁷⁷ Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the siege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation: to the queen, a splendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His proposals were obstinately rejected, and the refusal was accompanied with insult.

The firmness of Zenobia was supported by the hope that in a very short time famine would compel the Roman army to repass the desert; and by the reasonable expectation that the kings of the East, and particularly the Persian monarch, would arm in the defence of their most natural ally. But fortune and the perseverance of Aurelian overcame every obstacle. The death of Sapor, which happened about this time,⁷⁸ distracted the councils of Persia, and the inconsiderable succours that attempted to relieve Palmyra, were easily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular succession of convoys safely arrived in the camp, which was increased by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conquest of Egypt. It was then that Zenobia resolved to fly. She mounted the fleetest of her dromedaries,⁷⁹ and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about sixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the pursuit of Aurelian’s light horse, seized, and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital soon afterwards surrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horses, and camels, with an immense treasure of gold, silver, silk, and precious stones, were all delivered to the conqueror, who, leaving only a garrison of six hundred archers, returned to Emesa, and employed some time in the distribution of rewards and punishments at the end of so memorable a war, which restored to the obedience of Rome those provinces that had renounced their allegiance since the captivity of Valerian.



When the Syrian queen was brought into the presence of Aurelian, he sternly asked her, How she had presumed to rise in arms against the emperors of Rome? The answer of Zenobia was a prudent mixture of respect and firmness. "Because I disdained to consider as Roman emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus. You alone I acknowledge as my conqueror and my sovereign."⁸⁰ But, as female fortitude is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady or consistent. The courage of Zenobia deserted her in the hour of trial; she trembled at the angry clamours of the soldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution, forgot the generous despair of Cleopatra, which she had proposed as her model, and ignominiously purchased life by the sacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counsels, which governed the weakness of her sex, that she imputed the guilt of her obstinate resistance; it was on their heads that she directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will survive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned, him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered soldier, but they had served to elevate and harmonise the soul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy mistress, and bestowing comfort on his afflicted friends.⁸¹

Returning from the conquest of the East, Aurelian had already crossed the straits which divide Europe from Asia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the Palmyrenians had massacred the governor and garrison which he had left among them, and again erected the standard of revolt. Without a moment's deliberation, he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach, and the helpless city of Palmyra felt the irresistible weight of his resentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himself, in which he acknowledges⁸² that old men, women, children, and peasants had been involved in that dreadful execution, which should have been confined to armed rebellion; and, although his principal concern seems directed to the re-establishment of a temple of the Sun, he discovers some pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permission of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is easier to destroy than to restore. The seat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia gradually sunk into an obscure town, a trifling fortress, and at length a miserable village. The present citizens of Palmyra, consisting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the spacious court of a magnificent temple.

Another and a last labour still awaited the indefatigable Aurelian; to suppress a dangerous though obscure rebel, who, during the revolt of Palmyra, had arisen on the banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend and ally, as he proudly styled himself, of Odenathus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy merchant of Egypt. In the course of his trade to India, he had formed very intimate connections with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whose situation on either coast of the Red Sea gave them an easy introduction into the Upper Egypt. The Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom, and, at the head of their furious multitude, broke into the city of Alexandria, where he assumed the Imperial purple, coined money, published edicts, and raised an army, which, as he vainly boasted, he was capable of maintaining from the sole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence against the approach of Aurelian; and it seems almost unnecessary to relate that Firmus was routed, taken,

tortured, and put to death. Aurelian might now congratulate the senate, the people, and himself, that in little more than three years he had restored universal peace and order to the Roman world.[83](#)

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deserved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with superior pride and magnificence.[84](#) The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the most curious animals from every climate of the North, the East, and the South. They were followed by sixteen hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amusement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Asia, the arms and ensigns of so many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were disposed in exact symmetry or artful disorder. The ambassadors of the most remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or singular dresses, displayed the fame and power of the Roman emperor, who exposed likewise to the public view the presents that he had received, and particularly a great number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were attested by the long train of captives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians, and Egyptians. Each people was distinguished by its peculiar inscription, and the title of Amazons was bestowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation who had been taken in arms.[85](#) But every eye, disregarding the crowd of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus and the queen of the East. The former, as well as his son, whom he had created Augustus, was dressed in Gallic trowsers,[86](#) a saffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beautiful figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot in which she once hoped to enter the gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, still more sumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had formerly been used by a Gothic king) was drawn, on this memorable occasion, either by four stags or by four elephants.[87](#) The most illustrious of the senate, the people, and the army closed the solemn procession. Unfeigned joy, wonder, and gratitude swelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the satisfaction of the senate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they suppress a rising murmur that the haughty emperor should thus expose to public ignominy the person of a Roman and a magistrate.[88](#)

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, he behaved towards them with a generous clemency which was seldom exercised by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without success, had defended their throne or freedom were frequently strangled in prison, as soon as the triumphal pomp ascended the Capitol. These usurpers, whom their defeat had convicted of the crime of treason, were permitted to spend their lives in affluence and honourable repose. The emperor presented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur, or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen insensibly sank into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century.[89](#) Tetricus and his son were reinstated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian Hill a magnificent palace, and, as soon as it was finished, invited Aurelian to supper. On his entrance, he was agreeably surprised with a picture

which represented their singular history. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown and the sceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the senatorial dignity. The father was afterwards invested with the government of Lucania,⁹⁰ and Aurelian, who soon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendship and conversation, familiarly asked him, Whether it were not more desirable to administer a province of Italy, than to reign beyond the Alps? The son long continued a respectable member of the senate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more esteemed by Aurelian, as well as by his successors.⁹¹

So long and so various was the pomp of Aurelian's triumph that, although it opened with the dawn of day, the slow majesty of the procession ascended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark when the emperor returned to the palace. The festival was protracted by theatrical representations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beasts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were distributed to the army and people, and several institutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A considerable portion of his oriental spoils was consecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other temple, glittered with the offerings of his ostentatious piety; and the temple of the Sun alone received above fifteen thousand pounds of gold.⁹² This last was a magnificent structure, erected by the emperor on the side of the Quirinal Hill, and dedicated, soon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior priestess in a chapel of the Sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of Light was a sentiment which the fortunate peasant imbibed in his infancy; and every step of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified superstition by gratitude.⁹³

The arms of Aurelian had vanquished the foreign and domestic foes of the republic. We are assured that, by his salutary rigour, crimes and factions, mischievous arts and pernicious connivance, the luxuriant growth of a feeble and oppressive government, were eradicated throughout the Roman world.⁹⁴ But, if we attentively reflect how much swifter is the progress of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that the years abandoned to public disorders exceeded the months allotted to the martial reign of Aurelian, we must confess that a few short intervals of peace were insufficient for the arduous work of reformation. Even his attempt to restore the integrity of the coin was opposed by a formidable insurrection. The emperor's vexation breaks out in one of his private letters: "Surely," says he, "the gods have decreed that my life should be a perpetual warfare. A sedition within the walls has just now given birth to a very serious civil war. The workmen of the mint, at the instigation of Felicissimus, a slave to whom I had entrusted an employment in the finances, have risen in rebellion. They are at length suppressed; but seven thousand of my soldiers have been slain in the contest, of those troops whose ordinary station is in Dacia, and the camps along the Danube."⁹⁵ Other writers, who confirm the same fact, add likewise that it happened soon after Aurelian's triumph; that the decisive engagement was fought on the Cælian Hill; that the workmen of the mint had adulterated the coin; and that the emperor restored the public credit by delivering out good money in exchange for the bad which the people was commanded to bring into the treasury.⁹⁶

We might content ourselves with relating this extraordinary transaction, but we cannot dissemble how much, in its present form, it appears to us inconsistent and incredible. The debasement of the coin is, indeed, well suited to the administration of Gallienus; nor is it unlikely that the instruments of the corruption might dread the inflexible justice of Aurelian. But the guilt, as well as the profit, must have been confined to a few; nor is it easy to conceive by what arts they could arm a people whom they had injured against a monarch whom they had betrayed. We might naturally expect that such miscreants should have shared the public detestation with the informers and the other ministers of oppression; and that the reformation of the coin should have been an action equally popular with the destruction of those obsolete accounts which, by the emperor's order, were burnt in the forum of Trajan.⁹⁷ In an age when the principles of commerce were so imperfectly understood, the most desirable end might perhaps be effected by harsh and injudicious means; but a temporary grievance of such a nature can scarcely excite and support a serious civil war. The repetition of intolerable taxes, imposed either on the land or on the necessaries of life, may at last provoke those who will not, or who cannot, relinquish their country. But the case is far otherwise in every operation which, by whatsoever expedients, restores the just value of money. The transient evil is soon obliterated by the permanent benefit, the loss is divided among multitudes; and, if a few wealthy individuals experience a sensible diminution of treasure, with their riches they at the same time lose the degree of weight and importance which they derived from the possession of them. However Aurelian might choose to disguise the real cause of the insurrection, his reformation of the coin could furnish only a faint pretence to a party already powerful and discontented. Rome, though deprived of freedom, was distracted by faction. The people, towards whom the emperor, himself a plebeian, always expressed a peculiar fondness, lived in perpetual dissension with the senate, the equestrian order, and the Prætorian guards.⁹⁸ Nothing less than the firm though secret conspiracy of those orders, of the authority of the first, the wealth of the second, and the arms of the third, could have displayed a strength capable of contending in battle with the veteran legions of the Danube, which, under the conduct of a martial sovereign, had achieved the conquest of the West and of the East.

Whatever was the cause or the object of this rebellion, imputed with so little probability to the workmen of the mint, Aurelian used his victory with unrelenting rigour.⁹⁹ He was naturally of a severe disposition. A peasant and a soldier, his nerves yielded not easily to the impressions of sympathy, and he could sustain without emotion the sight of tortures and death. Trained from his earliest youth in the exercise of arms, he set too small a value on the life of a citizen, chastised by military execution the slightest offences, and transferred the stern discipline of the camp into the civil administration of the laws. His love of justice often became a blind and furious passion; and, whenever he deemed his own or the public safety endangered, he disregarded the rules of evidence, and the proportion of punishments. The unprovoked rebellion with which the Romans rewarded his services exasperated his haughty spirit. The noblest families of the capital were involved in the guilt or suspicion of this dark conspiracy. A hasty spirit of revenge urged the bloody prosecution, and it proved fatal to one of the nephews of the emperor. The executioners (if we may use the expression of a contemporary poet) were fatigued, the prisons were crowded, and the unhappy senate lamented the death or absence of its

most illustrious members. [100](#) Nor was the pride of Aurelian less offensive to that assembly than his cruelty. Ignorant or impatient of the restraints of civil institutions, he disdained to hold his power by any other title than that of the sword, and governed by right of conquest an empire which he had saved and subdued. [101](#)

It was observed by one of the most sagacious of the Roman princes that the talents of his predecessor Aurelian were better suited to the command of an army than to the government of an empire. [102](#) Conscious of the character in which nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exercise the restless temper of the legions in some foreign war, and the Persian monarch, exulting in the shame of Valerian, still braved with impunity the offended majesty of Rome. At the head of an army, less formidable by its numbers than by its discipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the Straits which divide Europe from Asia. He there experienced that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries who was accused of extortion; and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them, in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person; and, after a short resistance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general whom he had always loved and trusted. He died regretted by the army, detested by the senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state. [103](#)

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CHAPTER XII

Conduct of the Army and Senate after the Death of Aurelian — Reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and his Sons

Such was the unhappy condition of the Roman emperors, that, whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the same. A life of pleasure or virtue, of severity or mildness, of indolence or glory, alike led to an untimely grave; and almost every reign is closed by the same disgusting repetition of treason and murder. The death of Aurelian, however, is remarkable by its extraordinary consequences. The legions admired, lamented, and revenged their victorious chief. The artifice of his perfidious secretary was discovered and punished. The deluded conspirators attended the funeral of their injured sovereign, with sincere or well-feigned contrition, and submitted to the unanimous resolution of the military order, which was signified by the following epistle: “The brave and fortunate armies to the senate and people of Rome. The crime of one man, and the error of many, have deprived us of the late emperor Aurelian. May it please you, venerable lords and fathers! to place him in the number of the gods, and to appoint a successor whom your judgment shall declare worthy of the Imperial purple. None of those whose guilt or misfortune have contributed to our loss shall ever reign over us.”¹ The Roman senators heard, without surprise, that another emperor had been assassinated in his camp; they secretly rejoiced in the fall of Aurelian; but the modest and dutiful address of the legions, when it was communicated in full assembly by the consul, diffused the most pleasing astonishment. Such honours as fear and perhaps esteem could extort they liberally poured forth on the memory of their deceased sovereign. Such acknowledgments as gratitude could inspire they returned to the faithful armies of the republic, who entertained so just a sense of the legal authority of the senate in the choice of an emperor. Yet, notwithstanding this flattering appeal, the most prudent of the assembly declined exposing their safety and dignity to the caprice of an armed multitude. The strength of the legions was, indeed, a pledge of their sincerity, since those who may command are seldom reduced to the necessity of dissembling; but could it naturally be expected, that a hasty repentance would correct the inveterate habits of fourscore years? Should the soldiers relapse into their accustomed seditions, their insolence might disgrace the majesty of the senate, and prove fatal to the object of its choice. Motives like these dictated a decree by which the election of a new emperor was referred to the suffrage of the military order.

The contention that ensued is one of the best-attested, but most improbable, events in the history of mankind.² The troops, as if satiated with the exercise of power, again conjured the senate to invest one of its own body with the Imperial purple. The senate still persisted in its refusal; the army in its request. The reciprocal offer was pressed and rejected at least three times, and, whilst the obstinate modesty of either party was resolved to receive a master from the hands of the other, eight months insensibly elapsed; an amazing period of tranquil anarchy, during which the Roman world remained without a sovereign, without an usurper, and without a sedition. The generals and magistrates appointed by Aurelian continued to execute their ordinary

functions; and it is observed that a proconsul of Asia was the only considerable person removed from his office in the whole course of the interregnum.

An event somewhat similar, but much less authentic, is supposed to have happened after the death of Romulus, who, in his life and character, bore some affinity with Aurelian. The throne was vacant during twelve months till the election of a Sabine philosopher, and the public peace was guarded in the same manner by the union of the several orders of the state. But, in the time of Numa and Romulus, the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the patricians; and the balance of freedom was easily preserved in a small and virtuous community.³ The decline of the Roman state, far different from its infancy, was attended with every circumstance that could banish from an interregnum the prospect of obedience and harmony: an immense and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the servile equality of despotism, an army of four hundred thousand mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolution. Yet, notwithstanding all these temptations, the discipline and memory of Aurelian still restrained the seditious temper of the troops, as well as the fatal ambition of their leaders. The flower of the legions maintained their stations on the banks of the Bosphorus, and the Imperial standard awed the less powerful camps of Rome and of the provinces. A generous though transient enthusiasm seemed to animate the military order; and we may hope that a few real patriots cultivated the returning friendship of the army and the senate, as the only expedient capable of restoring the republic to its ancient beauty and vigour.

On the twenty-fifth of September,⁴ near eight months after the murder of Aurelian, the consul convoked an assembly of the senate, and reported the doubtful and dangerous situation of the empire. He slightly insinuated that the precarious loyalty of the soldiers depended on the chance of every hour and of every accident; but he represented, with the most convincing eloquence, the various dangers that might attend any farther delay in the choice of an emperor. Intelligence, he said, was already received that the Germans had passed the Rhine and occupied some of the strongest and most opulent cities of Gaul. The ambition of the Persian king kept the East in perpetual alarms; Egypt, Africa, and Illyricum were exposed to foreign and domestic arms; and the levity of Syria would prefer even a female sceptre to the sanctity of the Roman laws. The consul then, addressing himself to Tacitus, the first of the senators,⁵ required his opinion on the important subject of a proper candidate for the vacant throne.

If we can prefer personal merit to accidental greatness, we shall esteem the birth of Tacitus more truly noble than that of kings. He claimed his descent from the philosophic historian whose writings will instruct the last generations of mankind.⁶ The senator Tacitus was then seventy-five years of age.⁷ The long period of his innocent life was adorned with wealth and honours. He had twice been invested with the consular dignity,⁸ and enjoyed with elegance and sobriety his ample patrimony of between two and three millions sterling.⁹ The experience of so many princes, whom he had esteemed or endured, from the vain follies of Elagabalus to the useful rigour of Aurelian, taught him to form a just estimate of the duties, the dangers, and the temptations of their sublime station. From the assiduous study of his immortal ancestor he derived the knowledge of the Roman constitution and of human nature.¹⁰

The voice of the people had already named Tacitus as the citizen the most worthy of empire. The ungrateful rumour reached his ears, and induced him to seek the retirement of one of his villas in Campania. He had passed two months in the delightful privacy of Baiæ, when he reluctantly obeyed the summons of the consul to resume his honourable place in the senate, and to assist the republic with his counsels on this important occasion.

He arose to speak, when, from every quarter of the house, he was saluted with the names of Augustus and Emperor. "Tacitus Augustus, the gods preserve thee, we choose thee for our sovereign, to thy care we entrust the republic and the world. Accept the empire from the authority of the senate. It is due to thy rank, to thy conduct, to thy manners." As soon as the tumult of acclamations subsided, Tacitus attempted to decline the dangerous honour, and to express his wonder that they should elect his age and infirmities to succeed the martial vigour of Aurelian. "Are these limbs, conscript fathers! fitted to sustain the weight of armour, or to practise the exercises of the camp? The variety of climates, and the hardships of a military life, would soon oppress a feeble constitution, which subsists only by the most tender management. My exhausted strength scarcely enables me to discharge the duty of a senator; how insufficient would it prove to the arduous labours of war and government! Can you hope that the legions will respect a weak old man, whose days have been spent in the shade of peace and retirement? Can you desire that I should ever find reason to regret the favourable opinion of the senate?"¹¹

The reluctance of Tacitus, and it might possibly be sincere, was encountered by the affectionate obstinacy of the senate. Five hundred voices repeated at once, in eloquent confusion, that the greatest of the Roman princes, Numa, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, had ascended the throne in a very advanced season of life; that the mind, not the body, a sovereign, not a soldier, was the object of their choice; and that they expected from him no more than to guide by his wisdom the valour of the legions. These pressing though tumultuary instances were seconded by a more regular oration of Metius Falconius, the next on the consular bench to Tacitus himself. He reminded the assembly of the evils which Rome had endured from the vices of headstrong and capricious youths, congratulated them on the election of a virtuous and experienced senator, and, with a manly, though perhaps a selfish, freedom, exhorted Tacitus to remember the reasons of his elevation, and to seek a successor, not in his own family, but in the republic. The speech of Falconius was enforced by a general acclamation. The emperor-elect submitted to the authority of his country, and received the voluntary homage of his equals. The judgment of the senate was confirmed by the consent of the Roman people, and of the Prætorian guards.¹²

The administration of Tacitus was not unworthy of his life and principles. A grateful servant of the senate, he considered that national council as the author, and himself as the subject, of the laws.¹³ He studied to heal the wounds which Imperial pride, civil discord, and military violence had inflicted on the constitution, and to restore, at least, the image of the ancient republic, as it had been preserved by the policy of Augustus, and the virtues of Trajan and the Antonines. It may not be useless to recapitulate some of the most important prerogatives which the senate appeared to have regained by the election of Tacitus.¹⁴ 1. To invest one of their body, under the title of emperor, with

the general command of the armies and the government of the frontier provinces. 2. To determine the list, or, as it was then styled, the College of Consuls. They were twelve in number, who, in successive pairs, each during the space of two months, filled the year, and represented the dignity of that ancient office. The authority of the senate in the nomination of the consuls was exercised with such independent freedom that no regard was paid to an irregular request of the emperor in favour of his brother Florianus. “The senate,” exclaimed Tacitus, with the honest transport of a patriot, “understand the character of a prince whom they have chosen.” 3. To appoint the proconsuls and presidents of the provinces, and to confer on all the magistrates their civil jurisdiction. 4. To receive appeals through the intermediate office of the prefect of the city from all the tribunals of the empire. 5. To give force and validity, by their decrees, to such as they should approve of the emperor’s edicts. 6. To these several branches of authority we may add some inspection over the finances, since, even in the stern reign of Aurelian, it was in their power to divert a part of the revenue from the public service.[15](#)

Circular epistles were sent, without delay, to all the principal cities of the empire, Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, to claim their obedience, and to inform them of the happy revolution, which had restored the Roman senate to its ancient dignity. Two of these epistles are still extant. We likewise possess two very singular fragments of the private correspondence of the senators on this occasion. They discover the most excessive joy and the most unbounded hopes. “Cast away your indolence,” it is thus that one of the senators addresses his friend, “emerge from your retirements of Baiæ and Puteoli. Give yourself to the city, to the senate. Rome flourishes, the whole republic flourishes. Thanks to the Roman army, to an army truly Roman, at length we have recovered our just authority, the end of all our desires. We hear appeals, we appoint proconsuls, we create emperors: perhaps, too, we may restrain them — to the wise, a word is sufficient.”[16](#) These lofty expectations were, however, soon disappointed; nor, indeed, was it possible that the armies and the provinces should long obey the luxurious and unwarlike nobles of Rome. On the slightest touch, the unsupported fabric of their pride and power fell to the ground. The expiring senate displayed a sudden lustre, blazed for a moment, and was extinguished for ever.

All that had yet passed at Rome was no more than a theatrical representation, unless it was ratified by the more substantial power of the legions. Leaving the senators to enjoy their dream of freedom and ambition, Tacitus proceeded to the Thracian camp, and was there, by the Prætorian prefect, presented to the assembled troops, as the prince whom they themselves had demanded, and whom the senate had bestowed. As soon as the prefect was silent, the emperor addressed himself to the soldiers with elegance and propriety. He gratified their avarice by a liberal distribution of treasure, under the names of pay and donative. He engaged their esteem by a spirited declaration that, although his age might disable him from the performance of military exploits, his counsels should never be unworthy of a Roman general, the successor of the brave Aurelian.[17](#)

Whilst the deceased emperor was making preparations for a second expedition into the East, he had negotiated with the Alani, a Scythian people, who pitched their tents

in the neighbourhood of the lake Mæotis. Those barbarians, allured by presents and subsidies, had promised to invade Persia with a numerous body of light cavalry. They were faithful to their engagements; but, when they arrived on the Roman frontier, Aurelian was already dead, the design of the Persian war was at least suspended, and the generals, who, during the interregnum, exercised a doubtful authority, were unprepared either to receive or to oppose them. Provoked by such treatment, which they considered as trifling and perfidious, the Alani had recourse to their own valour for their payment and revenge; and, as they moved with the usual swiftness of Tartars, they had soon spread themselves over the provinces of Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galatia. The legions, who from the opposite shores of the Bosphorus could almost distinguish the flames of the cities and villages, impatiently urged their general to lead them against the invaders. The conduct of Tacitus was suitable to his age and station. He convinced the barbarians of the faith, as well as of the power, of the empire. Great numbers of the Alani, appeased by the punctual discharge of the engagements which Aurelian had contracted with them, relinquished their booty and captives, and quietly retreated to their own deserts beyond the Phasis. Against the remainder, who refused peace, the Roman emperor waged, in person, a successful war. Seconded by an army of brave and experienced veterans, in a few weeks he delivered the provinces of Asia from the terror of the Scythian invasion.[18](#)

But the glory and life of Tacitus were of short duration. Transported, in the depth of winter, from the soft retirement of Campania to the foot of Mount Caucasus, he sunk under the unaccustomed hardships of a military life. The fatigues of the body were aggravated by the cares of the mind. For a while, the angry and selfish passions of the soldiers had been suspended by the enthusiasm of public virtue. They soon broke out with redoubled violence, and raged in the camp, and even in the tent of the aged emperor. His mild and amiable character served only to inspire contempt, and he was incessantly tormented with factions which he could not assuage, and by demands which it was impossible to satisfy. Whatever flattering expectations he had conceived of reconciling the public disorders, Tacitus soon was convinced that the licentiousness of the army disdained the feeble restraint of laws, and his last hour was hastened by anguish and disappointment. It may be doubtful whether the soldiers imbrued their hands in the blood of this innocent prince.[19](#) It is certain that their insolence was the cause of his death. He expired at Tyana in Cappadocia, after a reign of only six months and about twenty days.[20](#)

The eyes of Tacitus were scarcely closed before his brother Florianus[21](#) showed himself unworthy to reign, by the hasty usurpation of the purple, without expecting the approbation of the senate. The reverence for the Roman constitution, which yet influenced the camp and the provinces, was sufficiently strong to dispose them to censure, but not to provoke them to oppose, the precipitate ambition of Florianus. The discontent would have evaporated in idle murmurs, had not the general of the East, the heroic Probus, boldly declared himself the avenger of the senate. The contest, however, was still unequal; nor could the most able leader, at the head of the effeminate troops of Egypt and Syria, encounter, with any hopes of victory, the legions of Europe, whose irresistible strength appeared to support the brother of Tacitus. But the fortune and activity of Probus triumphed over every obstacle. The hardy veterans of his rival, accustomed to cold climates, sickened and consumed away

in the sultry heats of Cilicia, where the summer proved remarkably unwholesome. Their numbers were diminished by frequent desertion, the passes of the mountains were feebly defended; Tarsus opened its gates, and the soldiers of Florianus, when they had permitted him to enjoy the Imperial title about three months,[22](#) delivered the empire from civil war by the easy sacrifice of a prince whom they despised.[23](#)

The perpetual revolutions of the throne had so perfectly erased every notion of hereditary right, that the family of an unfortunate emperor was incapable of exciting the jealousy of his successors. The children of Tacitus and Florianus were permitted to descend into a private station, and to mingle with the general mass of the people. Their poverty indeed became an additional safeguard to their innocence. When Tacitus was elected by the senate, he resigned his ample patrimony to the public service,[24](#) an act of generosity specious in appearance, but which evidently disclosed his intention of transmitting the empire to his descendants. The only consolation of their fallen state was the remembrance of transient greatness, and a distant hope, the child of a flattering prophecy, that, at the end of a thousand years, a monarch of the race of Tacitus should rise, the protector of the senate, the restorer of Rome, and the conqueror of the whole earth.[25](#)

The peasants of Illyricum, who had already given Claudius and Aurelian to the sinking empire, had an equal right to glory in the elevation of Probus.[26](#) Above twenty years before, the emperor Valerian, with his usual penetration, had discovered the rising merit of the young soldier, on whom he conferred the rank of tribune long before the age prescribed by the military regulations. The tribune soon justified his choice by a victory over a great body of Sarmatians, in which he saved the life of a near relation of Valerian; and deserved to receive from the emperor's hand the collars, bracelets, spears, and banners, the mural and the civic crown, and all the honourable rewards reserved by ancient Rome for successful valour. The third, and afterwards the tenth, legion were entrusted to the command of Probus, who, in every step of his promotion, showed himself superior to the station which he filled. Africa and Pontus, the Rhine, the Danube, the Euphrates, and the Nile, by turns afforded him the most splendid occasions of displaying his personal prowess and his conduct in war.[27](#) Aurelian was indebted to him for the conquest of Egypt, and still more indebted for the honest courage with which he often checked the cruelty of his master. Tacitus, who desired by the abilities of his generals to supply his own deficiency of military talents, named him commander in chief of all the Eastern provinces, with five times the usual salary, the promise of the consulship, and the hope of a triumph. When Probus ascended the Imperial throne, he was about forty-four years of age;[28](#) in the full possession of his fame, of the love of the army, and of a mature vigour of mind and body.

His acknowledged merit, and the success of his arms against Florianus, left him without an enemy or a competitor. Yet, if we may credit his own professions, very far from being desirous of the empire, he had accepted it with the most sincere reluctance. "But it is no longer in my power," says Probus, in a private letter, "to lay down a title so full of envy and of danger. I must continue to personate the character which the soldiers have imposed upon me."[29](#) His dutiful address to the senate displayed the sentiments, or at least the language, of a Roman patriot: "When you

elected one of your order, conscript father! to succeed the emperor Aurelian, you acted in a manner suitable to your justice and wisdom. For you are the legal sovereigns of the world, and the power which you derive from your ancestors will descend to your posterity. Happy would it have been, if Florianus, instead of usurping the purple of his brother, like a private inheritance, had expected what your majesty might determine, either in his favour or in that of any other person. The prudent soldiers have punished his rashness. To me they have offered the title of Augustus. But I submit to your clemency my pretensions and my merits.”³⁰ When this respectful epistle was read by the consul, the senators were unable to disguise their satisfaction that Probus should condescend thus humbly to solicit a sceptre which he already possessed. They celebrated with the warmest gratitude his virtues, his exploits, and above all his moderation. A decree immediately passed, without a dissenting voice, to ratify the election of the Eastern armies, and to confer on their chief all the several branches of the Imperial dignity: the names of Cæsar and Augustus, the title of Father of his country, the right of making in the same day three motions in the senate,³¹ the office of Pontifex Maximus, the tribunitian power, and the proconsular command; a mode of investiture, which, though it seemed to multiply the authority of the emperor, expressed the constitution of the ancient republic. The reign of Probus corresponded with this fair beginning. The senate was permitted to direct the civil administration of the empire. Their faithful general asserted the honour of the Roman arms, and often laid at their feet crowns of gold and barbaric trophies, the fruits of his numerous victories.³² Yet, whilst he gratified their vanity, he must secretly have despised their indolence and weakness. Though it was every moment in their power to repel the disgraceful edict of Gallienus, the proud successors of the Scipios patiently acquiesced in their exclusion from all military employments. They soon experienced that those who refuse the sword must renounce the sceptre.

The strength of Aurelian had crushed on every side the enemies of Rome. After his death they seemed to revive, with an increase of fury and of numbers. They were again vanquished by the active vigour of Probus, who, in a short reign of about six years,³³ equalled the fame of ancient heroes, and restored peace and order to every province of the Roman world. The dangerous frontier of Rhætia he so firmly secured, that he left it without the suspicion of an enemy. He broke the wandering power of the Sarmatian tribes, and by the terror of his arms compelled those barbarians to relinquish their spoil. The Gothic nation courted the alliance of so warlike an emperor.³⁴ He attacked the Isaurians in their mountains, besieged and took several of their strongest castles,³⁵ and flattered himself that he had for ever suppressed a domestic foe, whose independence so deeply wounded the majesty of the empire. The troubles excited by the usurper Firmus in the Upper Egypt had never been perfectly appeased, and the cities of Ptolemais and Coptos, fortified by the alliance of the Blemmyes, still maintained an obscure rebellion. The chastisement of those cities, and of their auxiliaries the savages of the South, is said to have alarmed the court of Persia,³⁶ and the Great King sued in vain for the friendship of Probus. Most of the exploits which distinguished his reign were achieved by the personal valour and conduct of the emperor, insomuch that the writer of his life expresses some amazement how, in so short a time, a single man could be present in so many distant wars. The remaining actions he entrusted to the care of his lieutenants, the judicious choice of whom forms no inconsiderable part of his glory. Carus, Diocletian,

Maximian, Constantius, Galerius, Asclepiodatus, Annibalianus, and a crowd of other chiefs, who afterwards ascended or supported the throne, were trained to arms in the severe school of Aurelian and Probus.[37](#)

But the most important service which Probus rendered to the republic was the deliverance of Gaul, and the recovery of seventy flourishing cities oppressed by the barbarians of Germany, who, since the death of Aurelian, had ravaged that great province with impunity.[38](#) Among the various multitude of those fierce invaders we may distinguish, with some degree of clearness, three great armies, or rather nations, successively vanquished by the valour of Probus. He drove back the Franks into their morasses; a descriptive circumstance from whence we may infer that the confederacy known by the manly appellation of *Free* already occupied the flat maritime country, intersected and almost overflowed by the stagnating waters of the Rhine, and that several tribes of the Frisians and Batavians had acceded to their alliance. He vanquished the Burgundians, a considerable people of the Vandalic race. They had wandered in quest of booty from the banks of the Oder to those of the Seine. They esteemed themselves sufficiently fortunate to purchase, by the restitution of all their booty, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. They attempted to elude that article of the treaty. Their punishment was immediate and terrible.[39](#) But of all the invaders of Gaul, the most formidable were the Lygians, a distant people who reigned over a wide domain on the frontiers of Poland and Silesia.[40](#) In the Lygian nation, the Aarii held the first rank by their numbers and fierceness. "The Aarii (it is thus that they are described by the energy of Tacitus) study to improve by art and circumstances the innate terrors of their barbarism. Their shields are black, their bodies are painted black. They choose for the combat the darkest hour of the night. Their host advances, covered as it were with a funereal shade;[41](#) nor do they often find an enemy capable of sustaining so strange and infernal an aspect. Of all our senses, the eyes are the first vanquished in battle."[42](#) Yet the arms and discipline of the Romans easily discomfited these horrid phantoms. The Lygii were defeated in a general engagement, and Semno, the most renowned of their chiefs, fell alive into the hands of Probus. That prudent emperor, unwilling to reduce a brave people to despair, granted them an honourable capitulation, and permitted them to return in safety to their native country. But the losses which they suffered in the march, the battle, and the retreat broke the power of the nation: nor is the Lygian name ever repeated in the history either of Germany or of the empire. The deliverance of Gaul is reported to have cost the lives of four hundred thousand of the invaders; a work of labour to the Romans, and of expense to the emperor, who gave a piece of gold for the head of every barbarian.[43](#) But, as the fame of warriors is built on the destruction of human kind, we may naturally suspect that the sanguinary account was multiplied by the avarice of the soldiers, and accepted without any very severe examination by the liberal vanity of Probus.

Since the expedition of Maximin, the Roman generals had confined their ambition to a defensive war against the nations of Germany, who perpetually pressed on the frontiers of the empire. The more daring Probus pursued his Gallic victories, passed the Rhine, and displayed his invincible eagles on the banks of the Elbe and the Neckar.[44](#) He was fully convinced that nothing could reconcile the minds of the barbarians to peace, unless they experienced in their own country the calamities of war. Germany, exhausted by the ill success of the last emigration, was astonished by

his presence. Nine of the most considerable princes repaired to his camp, and fell prostrate at his feet. Such a treaty was humbly received by the Germans, as it pleased the conqueror to dictate. He exacted a strict restitution of the effects and captives which they had carried away from the provinces; and obliged their own magistrates to punish the more obstinate robbers who presumed to detain any part of the spoil. A considerable tribute of corn, cattle, and horses, the only wealth of barbarians, was reserved for the use of the garrisons which Probus established on the limits of their territory. He even entertained some thoughts of compelling the Germans to relinquish the exercise of arms, and to trust their differences to the justice, their safety to the power, of Rome. To accomplish these salutary ends, the constant residence of an Imperial governor, supported by a numerous army, was indispensably requisite. Probus therefore judged it more expedient to defer the execution of so great a design; which was indeed rather of specious than solid utility.⁴⁵ Had Germany been reduced into the state of a province, the Romans, with immense labour and expense, would have acquired only a more extensive boundary to defend against the fiercer and more active barbarians of Scythia.

Instead of reducing the warlike natives of Germany to the condition of subjects, Probus contented himself with the humble expedient of raising a bulwark against their inroads. The country which now forms the circle of Swabia had been left desert in the age of Augustus by the emigration of its ancient inhabitants.⁴⁶ The fertility of the soil soon attracted a new colony from the adjacent provinces of Gaul. Crowds of adventurers, of a roving temper and of desperate fortunes, occupied the doubtful possession, and acknowledged, by the payment of tithes, the majesty of the empire.⁴⁷ To protect these new subjects, a line of frontier garrisons was gradually extended from the Rhine to the Danube. About the reign of Hadrian, when that mode of defence began to be practised, these garrisons were connected and covered by a strong intrenchment of trees and palisades. In the place of so rude a bulwark, the emperor Probus constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances. From the neighbourhood of Neustadt and Ratisbon on the Danube, it stretched across hills, valleys, rivers, and morasses, as far as Wimpfen on the Neckar, and at length terminated on the banks of the Rhine, after a winding course of near two hundred miles.⁴⁸ This important barrier, uniting the two mighty streams that protected the provinces of Europe, seemed to fill up the vacant space through which the barbarians, and particularly the Alemanni, could penetrate with the greatest facility into the heart of the empire. But the experience of the world, from China to Britain, has exposed the vain attempt of fortifying any extensive tract of country.⁴⁹ An active enemy, who can select and vary his points of attack, must, in the end, discover some feeble spot or unguarded moment. The strength as well as the attention of the defenders is divided; and such are the blind effects of terror on the firmest troops, that a line broken in a single place is almost instantly deserted. The fate of the wall which Probus erected may confirm the general observation. Within a few years after his death, it was overthrown by the Alemanni. Its scattered ruins, universally ascribed to the power of the Dæmon, now serve only to excite the wonder of the Swabian peasant.

Among the useful conditions of peace, imposed by Probus on the vanquished nations of Germany, was the obligation of supplying the Roman army with sixteen thousand

recruits, the bravest and most robust of their youth. The emperor dispersed them through all the provinces, and distributed this dangerous reinforcement in small bands, of fifty or sixty each, among the national troops; judiciously observing that the aid which the republic derived from the barbarians should be felt but not seen.⁵⁰ Their aid was now become necessary. The feeble elegance of Italy and the internal provinces could no longer support the weight of arms. The hardy frontier of the Rhine and Danube still produced minds and bodies equal to the labours of the camp; but a perpetual series of wars had gradually diminished their numbers. The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles of population, and not only destroyed the strength of the present, but intercepted the hope of future generations. The wisdom of Probus embraced a great and beneficial plan of replenishing the exhausted frontiers, by new colonies of captive or fugitive barbarians, on whom he bestowed lands, cattle, instruments of husbandry, and every encouragement that might engage them to educate a race of soldiers for the service of the republic. Into Britain, and most probably into Cambridgeshire,⁵¹ he transported a considerable body of Vandals. The impossibility of an escape reconciled them to their situation, and in the subsequent troubles of that island they approved themselves the most faithful servants of the state.⁵² Great numbers of Franks and Gepidæ were settled on the banks of the Danube and the Rhine. An hundred thousand Bastarnæ, expelled from their own country, cheerfully accepted an establishment in Thrace, and soon imbibed the manners and sentiments of Roman subjects.⁵³ But the expectations of Probus were too often disappointed. The impatience and idleness of the barbarians could ill brook the slow labours of agriculture. Their unconquerable love of freedom, rising against despotism, provoked them into hasty rebellions, alike fatal to themselves and to the provinces;⁵⁴ nor could these artificial supplies, however repeated by succeeding emperors, restore the important limit of Gaul and Illyricum to its ancient and native vigour.

Of all the barbarians who abandoned their new settlements, and disturbed the public tranquillity, a very small number returned to their own country. For a short season they might wander in arms through the empire; but in the end they were surely destroyed by the power of a warlike emperor. The successful rashness of a party of Franks was attended, however, with such memorable consequences, that it ought not to be passed unnoticed. They had been established by Probus on the sea coast of Pontus, with a view of strengthening that frontier against the inroads of the Alani. A fleet stationed in one of the harbours of the Euxine fell into the hands of the Franks; and they resolved, through unknown seas, to explore their way from the mouth of the Phasis to that of the Rhine. They easily escaped through the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and, cruising along the Mediterranean, indulged their appetite for revenge and plunder by frequent descents on the unsuspecting shores of Asia, Greece, and Africa. The opulent city of Syracuse, in whose port the navies of Athens and Carthage had formerly been sunk, was sacked by a handful of barbarians, who massacred the greatest part of the trembling inhabitants. From the island of Sicily the Franks proceeded to the columns of Hercules, trusted themselves to the ocean, coasted round Spain and Gaul, and, steering their triumphant course through the British channel, at length finished their surprising voyage, by landing in safety on the Batavian or Frisian shores.⁵⁵ The example of their success, instructing their countrymen to conceive the

advantages, and to despise the dangers, of the sea, pointed out to their enterprising spirit a new road to wealth and glory.

Notwithstanding the vigilance and activity of Probus, it was almost impossible that he could at once contain in obedience every part of his wide-extended dominions. The barbarians, who broke their chains, had seized the favourable opportunity of a domestic war. When the emperor marched to the relief of Gaul, he devolved the command of the East on Saturninus. That general, a man of merit and experience, was driven into rebellion by the absence of his sovereign, the levity of the Alexandrian people, the pressing instances of his friends, and his own fears; but from the moment of his elevation he never entertained a hope of empire, or even of life. "Alas!" he said, "the republic has lost a useful servant, and the rashness of an hour has destroyed the services of many years. You know not," continued he, "the misery of sovereign power: a sword is perpetually suspended over our head. We dread our very guards, we distrust our companions. The choice of action or of repose is no longer in our disposition, nor is there any age, or character, or conduct, that can protect us from the censure of envy. In thus exalting me to the throne, you have doomed me to a life of cares, and to an untimely fate. The only consolation which remains is the assurance that I shall not fall alone."⁵⁶ But, as the former part of his prediction was verified by the victory, so the latter was disappointed by the clemency, of Probus. That amiable prince attempted even to save the unhappy Saturninus from the fury of the soldiers. He had more than once solicited the usurper himself to place some confidence in the mercy of a sovereign who so highly esteemed his character, that he had punished, as a malicious informer, the first who related the improbable news of his defection.⁵⁷ Saturninus might, perhaps, have embraced the generous offer, had he not been restrained by the obstinate distrust of his adherents. Their guilt was deeper, and their hopes more sanguine, than those of their experienced leader.

The revolt of Saturninus was scarcely extinguished in the East, before new troubles were excited in the West by the rebellion of Bonosus and Proculus in Gaul. The most distinguished merit of those two officers was their respective prowess, of the one in the combats of Bacchus, of the other in those of Venus;⁵⁸ yet neither of them were destitute of courage and capacity, and both sustained, with honour, the august character which the fear of punishment had engaged them to assume, till they sunk at length beneath the superior genius of Probus. He used the victory with his accustomed moderation, and spared the fortunes as well as the lives of their innocent families.⁵⁹

The arms of Probus had now suppressed all the foreign and domestic enemies of the state. His mild but steady administration confirmed the re-establishment of the public tranquillity; nor was there left in the provinces a hostile barbarian, a tyrant, or even a robber, to revive the memory of past disorders. It was time that the emperor should revisit Rome, and celebrate his own glory and the general happiness. The triumph due to the valour of Probus was conducted with a magnificence suitable to his fortune, and the people who had so lately admired the trophies of Aurelian gazed with equal pleasure on those of his heroic successor.⁶⁰ We cannot, on this occasion, forget the desperate courage of about fourscore gladiators, reserved, with near six hundred others, for the inhuman sports of the amphitheatre. Disdaining to shed their blood for the amusement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke from the place of their

confinement, and filled the streets of Rome with blood and confusion. After an obstinate resistance they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular forces; but they obtained at least an honourable death, and the satisfaction of a just revenge.[61](#)

The military discipline which reigned in the camps of Probus was less cruel than that of Aurelian, but it was equally rigid and exact. The latter had punished the irregularities of the soldiers with unrelenting severity, the former prevented them by employing the legions in constant and useful labours. When Probus commanded in Egypt, he executed many considerable works for the splendour and benefit of that rich country. The navigation of the Nile, so important to Rome itself, was improved; and temples, bridges, porticos, and palaces were constructed by the hands of the soldiers, who acted by turns as architects, as engineers, and as husbandmen.[62](#) It was reported of Hannibal that, in order to preserve his troops from the dangerous temptations of idleness, he had obliged them to form large plantations of olive trees along the coast of Africa.[63](#) From a similar principle, Probus exercised his legions in covering with rich vineyards the hills of Gaul and Pannonia, and two considerable spots are described, which were entirely dug and planted by military labour.[64](#) One of these, known under the name of Mount Alma, was situated near Sirmium, the country where Probus was born, for which he ever retained a partial affection, and whose gratitude he endeavoured to secure by converting into tillage a large and unhealthy tract of marshy ground. An army thus employed constituted perhaps the most useful, as well as the bravest, portion of the Roman subjects.

But, in the prosecution of a favourite scheme, the best of men, satisfied with the rectitude of their intentions, are subject to forget the bounds of moderation; nor did Probus himself sufficiently consult the patience and disposition of his fierce legionaries.[65](#) The dangers of the military profession seem only to be compensated by a life of pleasure and idleness; but, if the duties of the soldier are incessantly aggravated by the labours of the peasant, he will at last sink under the intolerable burden, or shake it off with indignation. The imprudence of Probus is said to have inflamed the discontent of his troops. More attentive to the interests of mankind than to those of the army, he expressed the vain hope that, by the establishment of universal peace, he should soon abolish the necessity of a standing and mercenary force.[66](#) The unguarded expression proved fatal to him. In one of the hottest days of summer, as he severely urged the unwholesome labour of draining the marshes of Sirmium, the soldiers, impatient of fatigue, on a sudden threw down their tools, grasped their arms, and broke out into a furious mutiny. The emperor, conscious of his danger, took refuge in a lofty tower, constructed for the purpose of surveying the progress of the work.[67](#) The tower was instantly forced, and a thousand swords were plunged at once into the bosom of the unfortunate Probus. The rage of the troops subsided as soon as it had been gratified. They then lamented their fatal rashness, forgot the severity of the emperor whom they had massacred, and hastened to perpetuate, by an honourable monument, the memory of his virtues and victories.[68](#)

When the legions had indulged their grief and repentance for the death of Probus, their unanimous consent declared Carus, his Prætorian prefect, the most deserving of the Imperial throne. Every circumstance that relates to this prince appears of a mixed

and doubtful nature. He gloried in the title of Roman Citizen; and affected to compare the purity of *his* blood with the foreign, and even barbarous, origin of the preceding emperors: yet the most inquisitive of his contemporaries, very far from admitting his claim, have variously deduced his own birth, or that of his parents, from Illyricum, from Gaul, or from Africa.⁶⁹ Though a soldier, he had received a learned education; though a senator, he was invested with the first dignity of the army; and, in an age when the civil and military professions began to be irrecoverably separated from each other, they were united in the person of Carus. Notwithstanding the severe justice which he exercised against the assassins of Probus, to whose favour and esteem he was highly indebted, he could not escape the suspicion of being accessory to a deed from whence he derived the principal advantage. He enjoyed, at least before his elevation, an acknowledged character of virtue and abilities:⁷⁰ but his austere temper insensibly degenerated into moroseness and cruelty; and the imperfect writers of his life almost hesitate whether they shall not rank him in the number of Roman tyrants.⁷¹ When Carus assumed the purple, he was about sixty years of age, and his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, had already attained the season of manhood.⁷²

The authority of the senate expired with Probus; nor was the repentance of the soldiers displayed by the same dutiful regard for the civil power which they had testified after the unfortunate death of Aurelian. The election of Carus was decided without expecting the approbation of the senate, and the new emperor contented himself with announcing, in a cold and stately epistle, that he had ascended the vacant throne.⁷³ A behaviour so very opposite to that of his amiable predecessor afforded no favourable presage of the new reign; and the Romans, deprived of power and freedom, asserted their privilege of licentious murmurs.⁷⁴ The voice of congratulation and flattery was not however silent; and we may still peruse, with pleasure and contempt, an eclogue, which was composed on the accession of the emperor Carus. Two shepherds, avoiding the noon-tide heat, retire into the cave of Faunus. On a spreading beech they discover some recent characters. The rural deity had described, in prophetic verses, the felicity promised to the empire under the reign of so great a prince. Faunus hails the approach of that hero, who, receiving on his shoulders the sinking weight of the Roman world, shall extinguish war and faction, and once again restore the innocence and security of the golden age.⁷⁵

It is more than probable that these elegant trifles never reached the ears of a veteran general, who, with the consent of the legions, was preparing to execute the long-suspended design of the Persian war. Before his departure for this distant expedition, Carus conferred on his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, the title of Cæsar; and, investing the former with almost an equal share of the Imperial power, directed the young prince, first to suppress some troubles which had arisen in Gaul, and afterwards to fix the seat of his residence at Rome, and to assume the government of the Western provinces.⁷⁶ The safety of Illyricum was confirmed by a memorable defeat of the Sarmatians;⁷⁷ sixteen thousand of those barbarians remained on the field of battle, and the number of captives amounted to twenty thousand. The old emperor, animated with the fame and prospect of victory, pursued his march, in the midst of winter, through the countries of Thrace and Asia Minor, and at length, with his younger son, Numerian, arrived on the confines of the Persian monarchy. There, encamping on the

summit of a lofty mountain, he pointed out to his troops the opulence and luxury of the enemy whom they were about to invade.

The successor of Artaxerxes, Varnes or Bahram, though he had subdued the Segestans, one of the most warlike nations of Upper Asia,⁷⁸ was alarmed at the approach of the Romans and endeavoured to retard their progress by a negotiation of peace. His ambassadors entered the camp about sunset, at the time when the troops were satisfying their hunger with a frugal repast. The Persians expressed their desire of being introduced to the presence of the Roman emperor. They were at length conducted to a soldier, who was seated on the grass. A piece of stale bacon and a few hard peas composed his supper. A coarse woollen garment of purple was the only circumstance that announced his dignity. The conference was conducted with the same disregard of courtly elegance. Carus, taking off a cap which he wore to conceal his baldness, assured the ambassadors that, unless their master acknowledged the superiority of Rome, he would speedily render Persia as naked of trees as his own head was destitute of hair.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding some traces of art and preparation, we may discover, in this scene, the manners of Carus, and the severe simplicity which the martial princes, who succeeded Gallienus, had already restored in the Roman camps. The ministers of the Great King trembled and retired.

The threats of Carus were not without effect. He ravaged Mesopotamia, cut in pieces whatever opposed his passage, made himself master of the great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon (which seem to have surrendered without resistance), and carried his victorious arms beyond the Tigris.⁸⁰ He had seized the favourable moment for an invasion. The Persian councils were distracted by domestic factions, and the greater part of their forces were detained on the frontiers of India. Rome and the East received with transport the news of such important advantages. Flattery and hope painted, in the most lively colours, the fall of Persia, the conquest of Arabia, the submission of Egypt, and a lasting deliverance from the inroads of the Scythian nations.⁸¹ But the reign of Carus was destined to expose the vanity of predictions. They were scarcely uttered before they were contradicted by his death; an event attended with such ambiguous circumstances, that it may best be related in a letter from his own secretary to the prefect of the city. "Carus," says he, "our dearest emperor, was confined by sickness to his bed, when a furious tempest arose in the camp. The darkness which overspread the sky was so thick, that we could no longer distinguish each other; and the incessant flashes of lightning took from us the knowledge of all that passed in the general confusion. Immediately after the most violent clap of thunder, we heard a sudden cry that the emperor was dead; and it soon appeared that his chamberlains, in a rage of grief, had set fire to the royal pavilion, a circumstance which gave rise to the report that Carus was killed by lightning. But, as far as we have been able to investigate the truth, his death was the natural effect of his disorder."⁸²

The vacancy of the throne was not productive of any disturbance. The ambition of the aspiring generals was checked by their mutual fears, and young Numerian, with his absent brother Carinus, were unanimously acknowledged as Roman emperors. The public expected that the successor of Carus would pursue his father's footsteps, and, without allowing the Persians to recover from their consternation, would advance

sword in hand to the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana.⁸³ But the legions, however strong in numbers and discipline, were dismayed by the most abject superstition. Notwithstanding all the arts that were practised to disguise the manner of the late emperor's death, it was found impossible to remove the opinion of the multitude, and the power of opinion is irresistible. Places or persons struck with lightning were considered by the ancients with pious horror, as singularly devoted to the wrath of Heaven.⁸⁴ An oracle was remembered, which marked the river Tigris as the fatal boundary of the Roman arms. The troops, terrified with the fate of Carus and with their own danger, called aloud on young Numerian to obey the will of the gods, and to lead them away from this inauspicious scene of war. The feeble emperor was unable to subdue their obstinate prejudice, and the Persians wondered at the unexpected retreat of a victorious enemy.⁸⁵

The intelligence of the mysterious fate of the late emperor was soon carried from the frontiers of Persia to Rome; and the senate, as well as the provinces, congratulated the accession of the sons of Carus. These fortunate youths were strangers, however, to that conscious superiority, either of birth or of merit, which can alone render the possession of a throne easy, and as it were natural. Born and educated in a private station, the election of their father raised them at once to the rank of princes; and his death, which happened about sixteen months afterwards, left them the unexpected legacy of a vast empire. To sustain with temper this rapid elevation, an uncommon share of virtue and prudence was requisite; and Carinus, the elder of the brothers, was more than commonly deficient in those qualities. In the Gallic war, he discovered some degree of personal courage;⁸⁶ but, from the moment of his arrival at Rome, he abandoned himself to the luxury of the capital, and to the abuse of his fortune. He was soft, yet cruel; devoted to pleasure, but destitute of taste; and, though exquisitely susceptible of vanity, indifferent to the public esteem. In the course of a few months, he successively married and divorced nine wives,⁸⁷ most of whom he left pregnant; and, notwithstanding this legal inconstancy, found time to indulge such a variety of irregular appetites as brought dishonour on himself and on the noblest houses of Rome. He beheld with inveterate hatred all those who might remember his former obscurity, or censure his present conduct. He banished or put to death the friends and counsellors whom his father had placed about him to guide his inexperienced youth; and he persecuted with the meanest revenge his school-fellows and companions, who had not sufficiently respected the latent majesty of the emperor. With the senators, Carinus affected a lofty and regal demeanour, frequently declaring that he designed to distribute their estates among the populace of Rome. From the dregs of that populace he selected his favourites, and even his ministers. The palace, and even the Imperial table, was filled with singers, dancers, prostitutes, and all the various retinue of vice and folly. One of his door-keepers⁸⁸ he entrusted with the government of the city. In the room of the Prætorian prefect, whom he put to death, Carinus substituted one of the ministers of his looser pleasures. Another who possessed the same, or even a more infamous, title to favour, was invested with the consulship. A confidential secretary, who had acquired uncommon skill in the art of forgery, delivered the indolent emperor, with his own consent, from the irksome duty of signing his name.

When the emperor Carus undertook the Persian war, he was induced, by motives of affection as well as policy, to secure the fortunes of his family by leaving in the hands

of his eldest son the armies and provinces of the West. The intelligence which he soon received of the conduct of Carinus filled him with shame and regret; nor had he concealed his resolution of satisfying the republic by a severe act of justice, and of adopting, in the place of an unworthy son, the brave and virtuous Constantius, who at that time was governor of Dalmatia. But the elevation of Constantius was for a while deferred; and, as soon as a father's death had released Carinus from the control of fear or decency, he displayed to the Romans the extravagancies of Elagabalus, aggravated by the cruelty of Domitian.[89](#)

The only merit of the administration of Carinus that history could record or poetry celebrate was the uncommon splendour with which, in his own and his brother's name, he exhibited the Roman games of the theatre, the circus, and the amphitheatre. More than twenty years afterwards, when the courtiers of Diocletian represented to their frugal sovereign the fame and popularity of his munificent predecessor, he acknowledged that the reign of Carinus had indeed been a reign of pleasure.[90](#) But this vain prodigality, which the prudence of Diocletian might justly despise, was enjoyed with surprise and transport by the Roman people. The oldest of the citizens, recollecting the spectacles of former days, the triumphal pomp of Probus or Aurelian, and the secular games of the emperor Philip, acknowledged that they were all surpassed by the superior magnificence of Carinus.[91](#)

The spectacles of Carinus may therefore be best illustrated by the observation of some particulars, which history has condescended to relate concerning those of his predecessors. If we confine ourselves solely to the hunting of wild beasts, however we may censure the vanity of the design or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess that neither before nor since the time of the Romans so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people.[92](#) By the order of Probus, a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the circus. The spacious and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of an hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears.[93](#) The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable by the number than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people.[94](#) Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyænas, and ten Indian tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which Nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile,[95](#) and a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants.[96](#) While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of Rome. But this accidental benefit which science might derive from folly is surely insufficient to justify such a wanton abuse of the public riches. There occurs, however, a single instance in the first Punic war, in which the senate wisely connected this amusement of the multitude with the interest of the state.

A considerable number of elephants, taken in the defeat of the Carthaginian army, were driven through the circus by a few slaves, armed only with blunt javelins.⁹⁷ The useful spectacle served to impress the Roman soldier with a just contempt for those unwieldy animals; and he no longer dreaded to encounter them in the ranks of war.

The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts was conducted with a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment less expressive of Roman greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which so well deserved the epithet of Colossal.⁹⁸ It was a building of an elliptic figure, five hundred and sixty-four feet in length, and four hundred and sixty-seven in breadth, founded on fourscore arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture, to the height of one hundred and forty feet.⁹⁹ The outside of the edifice was encrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats, of marble likewise, covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators.¹⁰⁰ Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished) poured forth the immense multitude; and the entrances, passages, and staircases were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion.¹⁰¹ Nothing was omitted, which, in any respect, could be subservient to the convenience and pleasure of the spectators. They were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy, occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or stage, was strewn with the finest sand, and successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterwards broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The subterraneous pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain, might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with the monsters of the deep.¹⁰² In the decoration of these scenes the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality; and we read on various occasions that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber.¹⁰³ The poet who describes the games of Carinus, in the character of a shepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms that the nets designed as a defence against the wild beasts were of gold wire; that the porticos were gilded; and that the *belt* or circle which divided the several ranks of spectators from each other was studded with a precious Mosaic of beautiful stones.¹⁰⁴

In the midst of this glittering pageantry, the emperor Carinus, secure of his fortune, enjoyed the acclamations of the people, the flattery of his courtiers, and the songs of the poets, who, for want of a more essential merit, were reduced to celebrate the divine graces of his person.¹⁰⁵ In the same hour, but at the distance of nine hundred miles from Rome, his brother expired; and a sudden revolution transferred into the hands of a stranger the sceptre of the house of Carus.¹⁰⁶

The sons of Carus never saw each other after their father's death. The arrangements which their new situation required were probably deferred till the return of the younger brother to Rome, where a triumph was decreed to the young emperors, for the glorious success of the Persian war.¹⁰⁷ It is uncertain whether they intended to divide between them the administration or the provinces of the empire; but it is very unlikely that their union would have proved of any long duration. The jealousy of power must have been inflamed by the opposition of characters. In the most corrupt of times, Carinus was unworthy to live: Numerian deserved to reign in a happier period. His affable manners and gentle virtues secured him, as soon as they became known, the regard and affections of the public. He possessed the elegant accomplishments of a poet and orator, which dignify as well as adorn the humblest and the most exalted station. His eloquence, however it was applauded by the senate, was formed not so much on the model of Cicero, as on that of the modern declaimers; but in an age very far from being destitute of poetical merit, he contended for the prize with the most celebrated of his contemporaries, and still remained the friend of his rivals; a circumstance which evinces either the goodness of his heart, or the superiority of his genius.¹⁰⁸ But the talents of Numerian were rather of the contemplative than of the active kind. When his father's elevation reluctantly forced him from the shade of retirement, neither his temper nor his pursuits had qualified him for the command of armies. His constitution was destroyed by the hardships of the Persian war; and he had contracted, from the heat of the climate,¹⁰⁹ such a weakness in his eyes as obliged him, in the course of a long retreat, to confine himself to the solitude and darkness of a tent or litter. The administration of all affairs, civil as well as military, was devolved on Arrius Aper, the Prætorian prefect, who to the power of his important office added the honour of being father-in-law to Numerian. The Imperial pavilion was strictly guarded by his most trusty adherents; and, during many days, Aper delivered to the army the supposed mandates of their invisible sovereign.¹¹⁰

It was not till eight months after the death of Carus that the Roman army, returning by slow marches from the banks of the Tigris, arrived on those of the Thracian Bosphorus. The legions halted at Chalcedon in Asia, while the court passed over to Heraclea, on the European side of the Propontis.¹¹¹ But a report soon circulated through the camp, at first in secret whispers, and at length in loud clamours, of the emperor's death, and of the presumption of his ambitious minister, who still exercised the sovereign power in the name of a prince who was no more. The impatience of the soldiers could not long support a state of suspense. With rude curiosity they broke into the Imperial tent, and discovered only the corpse of Numerian.¹¹² The gradual decline of his health might have induced them to believe that his death was natural; but the concealment was interpreted as an evidence of guilt, and the measures which Aper had taken to secure his election became the immediate occasion of his ruin. Yet, even in the transport of their rage and grief, the troops observed a regular proceeding, which proves how firmly discipline had been re-established by the martial successors of Gallienus. A general assembly of the army was appointed to be held at Chalcedon, whither Aper was transported in chains, as a prisoner and a criminal. A vacant tribunal was erected in the midst of the camp, and the generals and tribunes formed a great military council. They soon announced to the multitude that their choice had fallen on Diocletian, commander of the domestics or body-guards,¹¹³ as the person the most capable of revenging and succeeding their beloved emperor. The future

fortunes of the candidate depended on the chance or conduct of the present hour. Conscious that the station which he had filled exposed him to some suspicions, Diocletian ascended the tribunal, and, raising his eyes towards the Sun, made a solemn profession of his own innocence, in the presence of that all-seeing Deity.[114](#) Then, assuming the tone of a sovereign and a judge, he commanded that Aper should be brought in chains to the foot of the tribunal. “This man,” said he, “is the murderer of Numerian;” and, without giving him time to enter on a dangerous justification, drew his sword, and buried it in the breast of the unfortunate prefect.[115](#) A charge supported by such decisive proof was admitted without contradiction, and the legions, with repeated acclamations, acknowledged the justice and authority of the emperor Diocletian.[116](#)

Before we enter upon the memorable reign of that prince, it will be proper to punish and dismiss the unworthy brother of Numerian. Carinus possessed arms and treasures sufficient to support his legal title to the empire.[117](#) But his personal vices overbalanced every advantage of birth and situation. The most faithful servants of the father despised the incapacity, and dreaded the cruel arrogance, of the son. The hearts of the people were engaged in favour of his rival, and even the senate was inclined to prefer an usurper to a tyrant. The arts of Diocletian inflamed the general discontent; and the winter was employed in secret intrigues, and open preparations for a civil war. In the spring the forces of the East and of the West encountered each other in the plains of Margus, a small city of Mæsia, in the neighbourhood of the Danube.[118](#) The troops, so lately returned from the Persian war, had acquired their glory at the expense of health and numbers, nor were they in a condition to contend with the unexhausted strength of the legions of Europe. Their ranks were broken, and, for a moment, Diocletian despaired of the purple and of life. But the advantage which Carinus had obtained by the valour of his soldiers he quickly lost by the infidelity of his officers. A tribune, whose wife he had seduced, seized the opportunity of revenge, and by a single blow extinguished civil discord in the blood of the adulterer.[119](#)



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CHAPTER XIII

The reign of Diocletian and his three associates, Maximian, Galerius, and Constantius — General re-establishment of order and tranquillity — The Persian war, victory, and triumph — The new form of administration — Abdication and retirement of Diocletian and Maximian

As the reign of Diocletian was more illustrious than that of any of his predecessors, so was his birth more abject and obscure. The strong claims of merit and of violence had frequently superseded the ideal prerogatives of nobility; but a distinct line of separation was hitherto preserved between the free and the servile part of mankind. The parents of Diocletian had been slaves in the house of Anulinus, a Roman senator; nor was he himself distinguished by any other name than that which he derived from a small town in Dalmatia, from whence his mother deduced her origin.¹ It is, however, probable, that his father obtained the freedom of the family, and that he soon acquired an office of scribe, which was commonly exercised by persons of his condition.² Favourable oracles, or rather the consciousness of superior merit, prompted his aspiring son to pursue the profession of arms and the hopes of fortune; and it would be extremely curious to observe the gradation of arts and accidents which enabled him in the end to fulfil those oracles, and to display that merit to the world. Diocletian was successively promoted to the government of Mæsia, the honours of the consulship, and the important command of the guards of the palace. He distinguished his abilities in the Persian war; and, after the death of Numerian, the slave, by the confession and judgment of his rivals, was declared the most worthy of the Imperial throne. The malice of religious zeal, whilst it arraigns the savage fierceness of his colleague Maximian, has affected to cast suspicions on the personal courage of the emperor Diocletian.³ It would not be easy to persuade us of the cowardice of a soldier of fortune, who acquired and preserved the esteem of the legions, as well as the favour of so many warlike princes. Yet even calumny is sagacious enough to discover and to attack the most vulnerable part. The valour of Diocletian was never found inadequate to his duty, or to the occasion; but he appears not to have possessed the daring and generous spirit of a hero, who courts danger and fame, disdains artifice, and boldly challenges the allegiance of his equals. His abilities were useful rather than splendid; a vigorous mind, improved by the experience and study of mankind, dexterity and application in business; a judicious mixture of liberality and economy, of mildness and rigour; profound dissimulation under the disguise of military frankness; steadiness to pursue his ends; flexibility to vary his means; and above all the great art of submitting his own passions, as well as those of others, to the interest of his ambition, and of colouring his ambition with the most specious pretences of justice and public utility. Like Augustus, Diocletian may be considered as the founder of a new empire.⁴ Like the adopted son of Cæsar, he was distinguished as a statesman rather than a warrior; nor did either of those princes employ force, whenever their purpose could be effected by policy.

The victory of Diocletian was remarkable for its singular mildness. A people accustomed to applaud the clemency of the conqueror, if the usual punishments of

death, exile, and confiscation were inflicted with any degree of temper and equity, beheld with the most pleasing astonishment a civil war, the flames of which were extinguished in the field of battle. Diocletian received into his confidence Aristobulus, the principal minister of the house of Carus, respected the lives, the fortunes, and the dignity of his adversaries, and even continued in their respective stations the greater number of the servants of Carinus.⁵ It is not improbable that motives of prudence might assist the humanity of the artful Dalmatian; of these servants many had purchased his favour by secret treachery; in others, he esteemed their grateful fidelity to an unfortunate master. The discerning judgment of Aurelian, of Probus, and of Carus had filled the several departments of the state and army with officers of approved merit, whose removal would have injured the public service, without promoting the interest of the successor. Such a conduct, however, displayed to the Roman world the fairest prospect of the new reign, and the emperor affected to confirm this favourable prepossession by declaring that, among all the virtues of his predecessors, he was the most ambitious of imitating the humane philosophy of Marcus Antoninus.⁶

The first considerable action of his reign seemed to evince his sincerity as well as his moderation. After the example of Marcus, he gave himself a colleague in the person of Maximian, on whom he bestowed at first the title of Cæsar, and afterwards that of Augustus.⁷ But the motives of his conduct, as well as the object of his choice, were of a very different nature from those of his admired predecessor. By investing a luxurious youth with the honours of the purple, Marcus had discharged a debt of private gratitude, at the expense, indeed, of the happiness of the state. By associating a friend and a fellow-soldier to the labours of government, Diocletian, in a time of public danger, provided for the defence both of the East and of the West. Maximian was born a peasant, and, like Aurelian, in the territory of Sirmium. Ignorant of letters,⁸ careless of laws, the rusticity of his appearance and manners still betrayed in the most elevated fortune the meanness of his extraction. War was the only art which he professed. In a long course of service, he had distinguished himself on every frontier of the empire; and, though his military talents were formed to obey rather than to command, though, perhaps, he never attained the skill of a consummate general, he was capable, by his valour, constancy, and experience, of executing the most arduous undertakings. Nor were the vices of Maximian less useful to his benefactor. Insensible to pity, and fearless of consequences, he was the ready instrument of every act of cruelty which the policy of that artful prince might at once suggest and disclaim. As soon as a bloody sacrifice had been offered to prudence or to revenge, Diocletian, by his seasonable intercession, saved the remaining few whom he had never designed to punish, gently censured the severity of his stern colleague, and enjoyed the comparison of a golden and an iron age, which was universally applied to their opposite maxims of government. Notwithstanding the difference of their characters, the two emperors maintained, on the throne, that friendship which they had contracted in a private station. The haughty turbulent spirit of Maximian, so fatal afterwards to himself and to the public peace, was accustomed to respect the genius of Diocletian, and confessed the ascendant of reason over brutal violence.⁹ From a motive either of pride or superstition, the two emperors assumed the titles, the one of Jovius, the other of Herculus. Whilst the motion of the world (such was the language

of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-seeing wisdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth of monsters and tyrants.[10](#)

But even the omnipotence of Jovius and Herculus was insufficient to sustain the weight of the public administration. The prudence of Diocletian discovered that the empire, assailed on every side by the barbarians, required on every side the presence of a great army, and of an emperor. With this view he resolved once more to divide his unwieldy power, and, with the inferior title of *Cæsars*, to confer on two generals of approved merit an equal share of the sovereign authority.[11](#) Galerius, surnamed Armentarius, from his original profession of a herdsman, and Constantius, who from his pale complexion had acquired the denomination of Chlorus,[12](#) were the two persons invested with the second honours of the Imperial purple. In describing the country, extraction, and manners of Herculus, we have already delineated those of Galerius, who was often, and not improperly, styled the younger Maximian, though in many instances both of virtue and ability he appears to have possessed a manifest superiority over the elder. The birth of Constantius was less obscure than that of his colleagues. Eutropius, his father, was one of the most considerable nobles of Dardania, and his mother was the niece of the emperor Claudius.[13](#) Although the youth of Constantius had been spent in arms, he was endowed with a mild and amiable disposition, and the popular voice had long since acknowledged him worthy of the rank which he at last attained. To strengthen the bonds of political, by those of domestic, union, each of the emperors assumed the character of a father to one of the *Cæsars*, Diocletian to Galerius, and Maximian to Constantius; and each, obliging them to repudiate their former wives, bestowed his daughter in marriage on his adopted son.[14](#) These four princes distributed among themselves the wide extent of the Roman empire. The defence of Gaul, Spain,[15](#) and Britain was entrusted to Constantius; Galerius was stationed on the banks of the Danube, as the safeguard of the Illyrian provinces. Italy and Africa were considered as the department of Maximian, and, for his peculiar portion, Diocletian reserved Thrace, Egypt, and the rich countries of Asia. Every one was sovereign within his own jurisdiction;[16](#) but their united authority extended over the whole monarchy; and each of them was prepared to assist his colleagues with his councils or presence. The *Cæsars*, in their exalted rank, revered the majesty of the emperors, and the three younger princes invariably acknowledged, by their gratitude and obedience, the common parent of their fortunes. The suspicious jealousy of power found not any place among them; and the singular happiness of their union has been compared to a chorus of music, whose harmony was regulated and maintained by the skilful hand of the first artist.[17](#)

This important measure was not carried into execution till about six years after the association of Maximian, and that interval of time had not been destitute of memorable incidents. But we have preferred, for the sake of perspicuity, first to describe the more perfect form of Diocletian's government, and afterwards to relate the actions of his reign, following rather the natural order of the events than the dates of a very doubtful chronology.



The first exploit of Maximian, though it is mentioned in a few words by our imperfect writers, deserves, from its singularity, to be recorded in a history of human manners.

He suppressed the peasants of Gaul, who, under the appellation of Bagaudæ,¹⁸ had risen in a general insurrection; very similar to those which in the fourteenth century successively afflicted both France and England.¹⁹ It should seem that very many of those institutions, referred by an easy solution to the feudal system, are derived from the Celtic barbarians. When Cæsar subdued the Gauls, that great nation was already divided into three orders of men: the clergy, the nobility, and the common people. The first governed by superstition, the second by arms, but the third and last was not of any weight or account in their public councils. It was very natural for the plebeians, oppressed by debt or apprehensive of injuries, to implore the protection of some powerful chief, who acquired over their persons and property the same absolute rights as, among the Greeks and Romans, a master exercised over his slaves.²⁰ The greatest part of the nation was gradually reduced into a state of servitude; compelled to perpetual labour on the estates of the Gallic nobles, and confined to the soil, either by the real weight of fetters, or by the no less cruel and forcible restraints of the laws. During the long series of troubles which agitated Gaul, from the reign of Gallienus to that of Diocletian, the condition of these servile peasants was peculiarly miserable; and they experienced at once the complicated tyranny of their masters, of the barbarians, of the soldiers, and of the officers of the revenue.²¹

Their patience was at last provoked into despair. On every side they rose in multitudes, armed with rustic weapons, and with irresistible fury. The ploughman became a footsoldier, the shepherd mounted on horseback, the deserted villages and open towns were abandoned to the flames, and the ravages of the peasants equalled those of the fiercest barbarians.²² They asserted the natural rights of men, but they asserted those rights with the most savage cruelty. The Gallic nobles, justly dreading their revenge, either took refuge in the fortified cities, or fled from the wild scene of anarchy. The peasants reigned without control; and two of their most daring leaders had the folly and rashness to assume the Imperial ornaments.²³ Their power soon expired at the approach of the legions. The strength of union and discipline obtained an easy victory over a licentious and divided multitude.²⁴ A severe retaliation was inflicted on the peasants who were found in arms; the affrighted remnant returned to their respective habitations, and their unsuccessful effort for freedom served only to confirm their slavery. So strong and uniform is the current of popular passions that we might almost venture, from very scanty materials, to relate the particulars of this war; but we are not disposed to believe that the principal leaders Ælianus and Amandus were Christians,²⁵ or to insinuate that the rebellion, as it happened in the time of Luther, was occasioned by the abuse of those benevolent principles of Christianity which inculcate the natural freedom of mankind.

Maximian had no sooner recovered Gaul from the hands of the peasants, than he lost Britain by the usurpation of Carausius. Ever since the rash but successful enterprise of the Franks under the reign of Probus, their daring countrymen had constructed squadrons of light brigantines, in which they incessantly ravaged the provinces adjacent to the ocean.²⁶ To repel their desultory incursions, it was found necessary to create a naval power; and the judicious measure was pursued with prudence and vigour. Gessoriacum or Boulogne, in the straits of the British channel, was chosen by the emperor for the station of the Roman fleet; and the command of it was entrusted to Carausius, a Menapian of the meanest origin,²⁷ but who had long signalled his skill

as a pilot, and his valour as a soldier. The integrity of the new admiral corresponded not with his abilities. When the German pirates sailed from their own harbours, he connived at their passage, but he diligently intercepted their return, and appropriated to his own use an ample share of the spoil which they had acquired. The wealth of Carausius was, on this occasion, very justly considered as an evidence of his guilt; and Maximian had already given orders for his death. But the crafty Menapian foresaw and prevented the severity of the emperor. By his liberality he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded, and secured the barbarians in his interest. From the port of Boulogne he sailed over to Britain, persuaded the legion and the auxiliaries which guarded that island to embrace his party, and boldly assuming, with the Imperial purple, the title of Augustus, defied the justice and the arms of his injured sovereign.[28](#)

When Britain was thus dismembered from the empire, its importance was sensibly felt, and its loss sincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and perhaps magnified, the extent of that noble island, provided on every side with convenient harbours; the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the soil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich pastures covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods free from wild beasts or venomous serpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilst they confessed that such a province well deserved to become the seat of an independent monarchy.[29](#) During the space of seven[30](#) years, it was possessed by Carausius; and fortune continued propitious to a rebellion supported with courage and ability. The British emperor defended the frontiers of his dominions against the Caledonians of the North, invited from the continent a great number of skilful artists, and displayed, on a variety of coins that are still extant, his taste and opulence. Born on the confines of the Franks, he courted the friendship of that formidable people, by the flattering imitation of their dress and manners. The bravest of their youth he enlisted among his land or sea forces; and, in return for their useful alliance, he communicated to the barbarians the dangerous knowledge of military and naval arts. Carausius still preserved the possession of Boulogne and the adjacent country. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coasts of the ocean, and diffused, beyond the Columns of Hercules, the terror of his name. Under his command, Britain, destined in a future age to obtain the empire of the sea, already assumed its natural and respectable station of a maritime power.[31](#)

By seizing the fleet of Boulogne, Carausius had deprived his master of the means of pursuit and revenge. And, when, after vast expense of time and labour, a new armament was launched into the water,[32](#) the Imperial troops, unaccustomed to that element, were easily baffled and defeated by the veteran sailors of the usurper. This disappointed effort was soon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocletian and his colleague, who justly dreaded the enterprising spirit of Carausius, resigned to him the sovereignty of Britain, and reluctantly admitted their perfidious servant to a participation of the Imperial honours.[33](#) But the adoption of the two Cæsars restored new vigour to the Roman arms; and, while the Rhine was guarded by the presence of Maximian, his brave associate, Constantius, assumed the conduct of the British war. His first enterprise was against the important place of Boulogne. A stupendous mole,

raised across the entrance of the harbour, intercepted all hopes of relief. The town surrendered after an obstinate defence; and a considerable part of the naval strength of Carausius fell into the hands of the besiegers. During the three years, which Constantius employed in preparing a fleet adequate to the conquest of Britain, he secured the coast of Gaul, invaded the country of the Franks, and deprived the usurper of the assistance of those powerful allies.

Before the preparations were finished, Constantius received the intelligence of the tyrant's death, and it was considered as a sure presage of the approaching victory. The servants of Carausius imitated the example of treason which he had given. He was murdered by his first minister Allectus, and the assassin succeeded to his power and to his danger. But he possessed not equal abilities either to exercise the one, or to repel the other. He beheld, with anxious terror, the opposite shores of the continent, already filled with arms, with troops, and with vessels; for Constantius had very prudently divided his forces, that he might likewise divide the attention and resistance of the enemy. The attack was at length made by the principal squadron, which, under the command of the prefect Asclepiodotus, an officer of distinguished merit, had been assembled in the mouth of the Seine. So imperfect in those times was the art of navigation that orators have celebrated the daring courage of the Romans, who ventured to set sail with a side-wind, and on a stormy day. The weather proved favourable to their enterprise. Under the cover of a thick fog, they escaped the fleet of Allectus, which had been stationed off the Isle of Wight to receive them, landed in safety on some part of the western coast, and convinced the Britons that a superiority of naval strength will not always protect their country from a foreign invasion. Asclepiodotus had no sooner disembarked the Imperial troops than he set fire to his ships; and, as the expedition proved fortunate, his heroic conduct was universally admired. The usurper had posted himself near London, to expect the formidable attack of Constantius, who commanded in person the fleet of Boulogne; but the descent of a new enemy required his immediate presence in the West. He performed this long march in so precipitate a manner that he encountered the whole force of the prefect with a small body of harassed and disheartened troops. The engagement was soon terminated by the total defeat and death of Allectus; a single battle, as it has often happened, decided the fate of this great island; and, when Constantius landed on the shores of Kent, he found them covered with obedient subjects. Their acclamations were loud and unanimous; and the virtues of the conqueror may induce us to believe that they sincerely rejoiced in a revolution which, after a separation of ten years, restored Britain to the body of the Roman empire.[34](#)

Britain had none but domestic enemies to dread; and, as long as the governors preserved their fidelity, and the troops their discipline, the incursions of the naked savages of Scotland or Ireland could never materially affect the safety of the province. The peace of the continent, and the defence of the principal rivers which bounded the empire, were objects of far greater difficulty and importance. The policy of Diocletian, which inspired the councils of his associates, provided for the public tranquillity, by encouraging a spirit of dissension among the barbarians, and by strengthening the fortifications of the Roman limit. In the East he fixed a line of camps from Egypt to the Persian dominions, and, for every camp, he instituted an adequate number of stationary troops, commanded by their respective officers, and

supplied with every kind of arms, from the new arsenals which he had formed at Antioch, Emesa, and Damascus.³⁵ Nor was the precaution of the emperor less watchful against the wellknown valour of the barbarians of Europe. From the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Danube, the ancient camps, towns, and citadels were diligently re-established, and, in the most exposed places, new ones were skilfully constructed; the strictest vigilance was introduced among the garrisons of the frontier, and every expedient was practised that could render the long chain of fortifications firm and impenetrable.³⁶ A barrier so respectable was seldom violated, and the barbarians often turned against each other their disappointed rage. The Goths, the Vandals, the Gepidæ, the Burgundians, the Alemanni, wasted each other's strength by destructive hostilities: and whosoever vanquished, they vanquished the enemies of Rome. The subjects of Diocletian enjoyed the bloody spectacle, and congratulated each other that the mischiefs of civil war were now experienced only by the barbarians.³⁷

Notwithstanding the policy of Diocletian, it was impossible to maintain an equal and undisturbed tranquillity during a reign of twenty years, and along a frontier of many hundred miles. Sometimes the barbarians suspended their domestic animosities, and the vigilance of the garrisons sometimes gave a passage to their strength or dexterity. Whenever the provinces were invaded, Diocletian conducted himself with that calm dignity which he always affected or possessed; reserved his presence for such occasions as were worthy of his interposition, never exposed his person or reputation to any unnecessary danger, ensured his success by every means that prudence could suggest, and displayed, with ostentation, the consequences of his victory. In wars of a more difficult nature, and more doubtful event, he employed the rough valour of Maximian, and that faithful soldier was content to ascribe his own victories to the wise counsels and auspicious influence of his benefactor. But, after the adoption of the two Cæsars, the emperors, themselves retiring to a less laborious scene of action, devolved on their adopted sons the defence of the Danube and of the Rhine. The vigilant Galerius was never reduced to the necessity of vanquishing an army of barbarians on the Roman territory.³⁸ The brave and active Constantius delivered Gaul from a very furious inroad of the Alemanni; and his victories of Langres and Vindonissa appear to have been actions of considerable danger and merit. As he traversed the open country with a feeble guard he was encompassed on a sudden by the superior multitude of the enemy. He retreated with difficulty towards Langres; but, in the general consternation, the citizens refused to open their gates, and the wounded prince was drawn up the wall by the means of a rope. But on the news of his distress the Roman troops hastened from all sides to his relief, and before the evening he had satisfied his honour and revenge by the slaughter of six thousand Alemanni.³⁹ From the monuments of those times, the obscure traces of several other victories over the barbarians of Sarmatia and Germany might possibly be collected; but the tedious search would not be rewarded either with amusement or with instruction.



The conduct which the emperor Probus had adopted in the disposal of the vanquished was imitated by Diocletian and his associates. The captive barbarians, exchanging death for slavery, were distributed among the provincials, and assigned to those districts (in Gaul, the territories of Amiens, Beauvais, Cambrai, Treves, Langres, and Troyes are particularly specified⁴⁰) which had been depopulated by the calamities of war. They were usefully employed as shepherds and husbandmen, but were denied the exercise of arms, except when it was found expedient to enrol them in the military service. Nor did the emperors refuse the property of lands, with a less servile tenure, to such of the barbarians as solicited the protection of Rome. They granted a

settlement to several colonies of the Carpi, the Bastarnæ, and the Sarmatians; and, by a dangerous indulgence, permitted them in some measure to retain their national manners and independence.⁴¹ Among the provincials, it was a subject of flattering exultation, that the barbarian, so lately an object of terror, now cultivated their lands, drove their cattle to the neighbouring fair, and contributed by his labour to the public plenty. They congratulated their masters on the powerful accession of subjects and soldiers; but they forgot to observe that multitudes of secret enemies, insolent from favour, or desperate from oppression, were introduced into the heart of the empire.⁴²

While the Cæsars exercised their valour on the banks of the Rhine and Danube, the presence of the emperors was required on the southern confines of the Roman world. From the Nile to Mount Atlas, Africa was in arms. A confederacy of five Moorish nations issued from their deserts to invade the peaceful provinces.⁴³ Julian had assumed the purple at Carthage,⁴⁴ Achilles at Alexandria;⁴⁵ and even the Blemmyes renewed, or rather continued, their incursions into the Upper Egypt. Scarcely any circumstances have been preserved of the exploits of Maximian in the western parts of Africa; but it appears, by the event, that the progress of his arms was rapid and decisive, that he vanquished the fiercest barbarians of Mauritania, and that he removed them from the mountains, whose inaccessible strength had inspired their inhabitants with a lawless confidence, and habituated them to a life of rapine and violence.⁴⁶ Diocletian, on his side, opened the campaign in Egypt by the siege of Alexandria, cut off the aqueducts which conveyed the waters of the Nile into every quarter of that immense city,⁴⁷ and, rendering his camp impregnable to the sallies of the besieged multitude, he pushed his reiterated attacks with caution and vigour. After a siege of eight months, Alexandria, wasted by the sword and by fire, implored the clemency of the conqueror; but it experienced the full extent of his severity. Many thousands of the citizens perished in a promiscuous slaughter, and there were few obnoxious persons in Egypt who escaped a sentence either of death or at least of exile.⁴⁸ The fate of Busiris and of Coptos was still more melancholy than that of Alexandria; those proud cities, the former distinguished by its antiquity, the latter enriched by the passage of the Indian trade, were utterly destroyed by the arms and by the severe order of Diocletian.⁴⁹ The character of the Egyptian nation, insensible to kindness, but extremely susceptible of fear, could alone justify this excessive rigour. The seditions of Alexandria had often affected the tranquillity and subsistence of Rome itself. Since the usurpation of Firmus, the province of Upper Egypt, incessantly relapsing into rebellion, had embraced the alliance of the savages of Æthiopia. The number of the Blemmyes, scattered between the Island of Meroe and the Red Sea, was very inconsiderable, their disposition was unwarlike, their weapons rude and inoffensive.⁵⁰ Yet in the public disorders these barbarians, whom antiquity, shocked with the deformity of their figure, had almost excluded from the human species, presumed to rank themselves among the enemies of Rome.⁵¹ Such had been the unworthy allies of the Egyptians; and, while the attention of the state was engaged in more serious wars, their vexatious inroads might again harass the repose of the province. With a view of opposing to the Blemmyes a suitable adversary, Diocletian persuaded the Nobatæ, or people of Nubia, to remove from their ancient habitations in the deserts of Libya, and resigned to them an extensive but unprofitable territory, above Syene and the cataracts of the Nile, with the stipulation that they should ever respect and guard the frontier of the empire. The treaty long subsisted; and till the

establishment of Christianity introduced stricter notions of religious worship, it was annually ratified by a solemn sacrifice in the isle of Elephantine, in which the Romans, as well as the barbarians, adored the same visible or invisible powers of the universe.[52](#)

At the same time that Diocletian chastised the past crimes of the Egyptians, he provided for their future safety and happiness by many wise regulations, which were confirmed and enforced under the succeeding reigns.[53](#) One very remarkable edict, which he published, instead of being condemned as the effect of jealous tyranny, deserves to be applauded as an act of prudence and humanity. He caused a diligent inquiry to be made “for all the ancient books which treated of the admirable art of making gold and silver, and without pity committed them to the flames; apprehensive, as we are assured, lest the opulence of the Egyptians should inspire them with confidence to rebel against the empire.”[54](#) But, if Diocletian had been convinced of the reality of that valuable art, far from extinguishing the memory, he would have converted the operation of it to the benefit of the public revenue. It is much more likely that his good sense discovered to him the folly of such magnificent pretensions, and that he was desirous of preserving the reason and fortunes of his subjects from the mischievous pursuit. It may be remarked that these ancient books, so liberally ascribed to Pythagoras, to Solomon, or to Hermes, were the pious frauds of more recent adepts. The Greeks were inattentive either to the use or to the abuse of chymistry. In that immense register where Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind, there is not the least mention of the transmutation of metals; and the persecution of Diocletian is the first authentic event in the history of alchymy. The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs diffused that vain science over the globe. Congenial to the avarice of the human heart, it was studied in China as in Europe, with equal eagerness, and with equal success. The darkness of the middle ages ensured a favourable reception to every tale of wonder, and the revival of learning gave new vigour to hope, and suggested more specious arts of deception. Philosophy, with the aid of experience, has at length banished the study of alchymy; and the present age, however desirous of riches, is content to seek them by the humbler means of commerce and industry.[55](#)

The reduction of Egypt was immediately followed by the Persian war. It was reserved for the reign of Diocletian to vanquish that powerful nation, and to extort a confession from the successors of Artaxerxes, of the superior majesty of the Roman empire.

We have observed, under the reign of Valerian, that Armenia was subdued by the perfidy and the arms of the Persians, and that, after the assassination of Chosroes, his son Tiridates, the infant heir of the monarchy, was saved by the fidelity of his friends, and educated under the protection of the emperors. Tiridates derived from his exile such advantages as he could never have attained on the throne of Armenia: the early knowledge of adversity, of mankind, and of the Roman discipline. He signalised his youth by deeds of valour, and displayed a matchless dexterity, as well as strength, in every martial exercise, and even in the less honourable contests of the Olympian games.[56](#) Those qualities were more nobly exerted in the defence of his benefactor Licinius.[57](#) That officer, in the sedition which occasioned the death of Probus, was exposed to the most imminent danger, and the enraged soldiers were forcing their way

into his tent, when they were checked by the single arm of the Armenian prince. The gratitude of Tiridates contributed soon afterwards to his restoration. Licinius was in every station the friend and companion of Galerius, and the merit of Galerius, long before he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, had been known and esteemed by Diocletian. In the third year of that emperor's reign, Tiridates was invested with the kingdom of Armenia. The justice of the measure was not less evident than its expediency. It was time to rescue from the usurpation of the Persian monarch an important territory, which, since the reign of Nero, had been always granted under the protection of the empire to a younger branch of the house of Arsaces.[58](#)

When Tiridates appeared on the frontiers of Armenia, he was received with an unfeigned transport of joy and loyalty. During twenty-six years, the country had experienced the real and imaginary hardships of a foreign yoke. The Persian monarchs had adorned their new conquest with magnificent buildings; but those monuments had been erected at the expense of the people, and were abhorred as badges of slavery. The apprehension of a revolt had inspired the most rigorous precautions: oppression had been aggravated by insult, and the consciousness of the public hatred had been productive of every measure that could render it still more implacable. We have already remarked the intolerant spirit of the Magian religion. The statues of the deified kings of Armenia, and the sacred images of the sun and moon, were broken in pieces by the zeal of the conqueror; and the perpetual fire of Ormuzd was kindled and preserved upon an altar erected on the summit of Mount Bagavan.[59](#) It was natural that a people exasperated by so many injuries should arm with zeal in the cause of their independence, their religion, and their hereditary sovereign. The torrent bore down every obstacle, and the Persian garrison retreated before its fury. The nobles of Armenia flew to the standard of Tiridates, all alleging their past merit, offering their future service, and soliciting from the new king those honours and rewards from which they had been excluded with disdain under the foreign government.[60](#) The command of the army was bestowed on Artavasdes, whose father had saved the infancy of Tiridates, and whose family had been massacred for that generous action. The brother of Artavasdes obtained the government of a province. One of the first military dignities was conferred on the satrap Otas, a man of singular temperance and fortitude, who presented to the king his sister[61](#) and a considerable treasure, both of which, in a sequestered fortress, Otas had preserved from violation. Among the Armenian nobles appeared an ally, whose fortunes are too remarkable to pass unnoticed. His name was Mamgo, his origin was Scythian, and the horde which acknowledged his authority had encamped a very few years before on the skirts of the Chinese empire,[62](#) which at that time extended as far as the neighbourhood of Sogdiana.[63](#) Having incurred the displeasure of his master, Mamgo, with his followers, retired to the banks of the Oxus, and implored the protection of Sapor. The emperor of China claimed the fugitive, and alleged the rights of sovereignty. The Persian monarch pleaded the laws of hospitality, and with some difficulty avoided a war, by the promise that he would banish Mamgo to the uttermost parts of the West; a punishment, as he described it, not less dreadful than death itself. Armenia was chosen for the place of exile, and a large district was assigned to the Scythian horde, on which they might feed their flocks and herds, and remove their encampment from one place to another according to the different seasons of the year. They were employed to repel the invasion of Tiridates; but their leader, after weighing

the obligations and injuries which he had received from the Persian monarch, resolved to abandon his party. The Armenian prince, who was well acquainted with the merit as well as power of Mamgo, treated him with distinguished respect; and, by admitting him into his confidence, acquired a brave and faithful servant, who contributed very effectually to his restoration.[64](#)

For a while, fortune appeared to favour the enterprising valour of Tiridates. He not only expelled the enemies of his family and country from the whole extent of Armenia, but in the prosecution of his revenge he carried his arms, or at least his incursions, into the heart of Assyria. The historian who has preserved the name of Tiridates from oblivion celebrates, with a degree of national enthusiasm, his personal prowess; and, in the true spirit of Eastern romance, describes the giants and the elephants that fell beneath his invincible arm. It is from other information that we discover the distracted state of the Persian monarchy, to which the king of Armenia was indebted for some part of his advantages. The throne was disputed by the ambition of contending brothers; and Hormuz, after exerting without success the strength of his own party, had recourse to the dangerous assistance of the barbarians who inhabited the banks of the Caspian Sea.[65](#) The civil war was, however, soon terminated, either by a victory or by a reconciliation; and Narses, who was universally acknowledged as king of Persia, directed his whole force against the foreign enemy. The contest then became too unequal; nor was the valour of the hero able to withstand the power of the monarch. Tiridates, a second time expelled from the throne of Armenia, once more took refuge in the court of the emperors. Narses soon re-established his authority over the revolted province; and, loudly complaining of the protection afforded by the Romans to rebels and fugitives, aspired to the conquest of the East.[66](#)

Neither prudence nor honour could permit the emperors to forsake the cause of the Armenian king, and it was resolved to exert the force of the empire in the Persian war. Diocletian, with the calm dignity which he constantly assumed, fixed his own station in the city of Antioch, from whence he prepared and directed the military operations.[67](#) The conduct of the legions was entrusted to the intrepid valour of Galerius, who, for that important purpose, was removed from the banks of the Danube to those of the Euphrates. The armies soon encountered each other in the plains of Mesopotamia, and two battles were fought with various and doubtful success: but the third engagement was of a more decisive nature; and the Roman army received a total overthrow, which is attributed to the rashness of Galerius, who, with an inconsiderable body of troops, attacked the innumerable host of the Persians.[68](#) But the consideration of the country that was the scene of action may suggest another reason for his defeat. The same ground, on which Galerius was vanquished, had been rendered memorable by the death of Crassus and the slaughter of ten legions. It was a plain of more than sixty miles, which extended from the hills of Carrhæ to the Euphrates; a smooth and barren surface of sandy desert, without a hillock, without a tree, and without a spring of fresh water.[69](#) The steady infantry of the Romans, fainting with heat and thirst, could neither hope for victory, if they preserved their ranks, nor break their ranks without exposing themselves to the most imminent danger. In this situation, they were gradually encompassed by the superior numbers, harassed by the rapid evolutions, and destroyed by the arrows, of the barbarian

cavalry. The king of Armenia had signalled his valour in the battle, and acquired personal glory by the public misfortune. He was pursued as far as the Euphrates; his horse was wounded, and it appeared impossible for him to escape the victorious enemy. In this extremity, Tiridates embraced the only refuge which he saw before him: he dismounted and plunged into the stream. His armour was heavy, the river very deep, and in those parts at least half a mile in breadth;⁷⁰ yet such was his strength and dexterity that he reached in safety the opposite bank.⁷¹ With regard to the Roman general, we are ignorant of the circumstances of his escape; but, when he returned to Antioch, Diocletian received him, not with the tenderness of a friend and colleague, but with the indignation of an offended sovereign. The haughtiest of men, clothed in his purple, but humbled by the sense of his fault and misfortune, was obliged to follow the emperor's chariot above a mile on foot, and to exhibit before the whole court the spectacle of his disgrace.⁷²

As soon as Diocletian had indulged his private resentment, and asserted the majesty of supreme power, he yielded to the submissive entreaties of the Cæsar, and permitted him to retrieve his own honour as well as that of the Roman arms. In the room of the unwarlike troops of Asia, which had most probably served in the first expedition, a second army was drawn from the veterans and new levies of the Illyrian frontier, and a considerable body of Gothic auxiliaries were taken into the Imperial pay.⁷³ At the head of a chosen army of twenty-five thousand men, Galerius again passed the Euphrates; but, instead of exposing his legions in the open plains of Mesopotamia, he advanced through the mountains of Armenia, where he found the inhabitants devoted to his cause, and the country as favourable to the operations of infantry as it was inconvenient for the motions of cavalry.⁷⁴ Adversity had confirmed the Roman discipline, whilst the barbarians, elated by success, were become so negligent and remiss, that, in the moment when they least expected it, they were surprised by the active conduct of Galerius, who, attended only by two horsemen, had, with his own eyes, secretly examined the state and position of their camp. A surprise, especially in the night-time, was for the most part fatal to a Persian army. "Their horses were tied, and generally shackled, to prevent their running away; and, if an alarm happened, a Persian had his housing to fix, his horse to bridle, and his corselet to put on, before he could mount."⁷⁵ On this occasion, the impetuous attack of Galerius spread disorder and dismay over the camp of the barbarians. A slight resistance was followed by a dreadful carnage, and, in the general confusion, the wounded monarch (for Narses commanded his armies in person) fled towards the deserts of Media. His sumptuous tents, and those of his satraps, afforded an immense booty to the conqueror; and an incident is mentioned, which proves the rustic but martial ignorance of the legions in the elegant superfluities of life. A bag of shining leather, filled with pearls, fell into the hands of a private soldier; he carefully preserved the bag, but he threw away its contents, judging that whatever was of no use could not possibly be of any value.⁷⁶ The principal loss of Narses was of a much more affecting nature. Several of his wives, his sisters, and children, who had attended the army, were made captives in the defeat. But, though the character of Galerius had in general very little affinity with that of Alexander, he imitated, after his victory, the amiable behaviour of the Macedonian towards the family of Darius. The wives and children of Narses were protected from violence and rapine, conveyed to a place of safety, and treated with

every mark of respect and tenderness that was due, from a generous enemy, to their age, their sex, and their royal dignity.[77](#)

While the East anxiously expected the decision of this great contest, the emperor Diocletian, having assembled in Syria a strong army of observation, displayed from a distance the resources of the Roman power, and reserved himself for any future emergency of the war. On the intelligence of the victory, he condescended to advance towards the frontier, with a view of moderating, by his presence and counsels, the pride of Galerius. The interview of the Roman princes at Nisibis was accompanied with every expression of respect on one side, and of esteem on the other. It was in that city that they soon afterwards gave audience to the ambassador of the Great King.[78](#) The power, or at least the spirit, of Narses had been broken by his last defeat; and he considered an immediate peace as the only means that could stop the progress of the Roman arms. He despatched Apherban, a servant who possessed his favour and confidence, with a commission to negotiate a treaty, or rather to receive whatever conditions the conqueror should impose. Apherban opened the conference by expressing his master's gratitude for the generous treatment of his family, and by soliciting the liberty of those illustrious captives. He celebrated the valour of Galerius, without degrading the reputation of Narses, and thought it no dishonour to confess the superiority of the victorious Cæsar over a monarch who had surpassed in glory all the princes of his race. Notwithstanding the justice of the Persian cause, he was empowered to submit the present differences to the decision of the emperors themselves; convinced as he was, that, in the midst of prosperity, they would not be unmindful of the vicissitudes of fortune. Apherban concluded his discourse in the style of Eastern allegory, by observing that the Roman and Persian monarchies were the two eyes of the world, which would remain imperfect and mutilated, if either of them should be put out.

“It well becomes the Persians,” replied Galerius, with a transport of fury, which seemed to convulse his whole frame, “it well becomes the Persians to expatiate on the vicissitudes of fortune and calmly to read us lectures on the virtues of moderation. Let them remember their own *moderation* towards the unhappy Valerian. They vanquished him by fraud, they treated him with indignity. They detained him till the last moment of his life in shameful captivity, and, after his death, they exposed his body to perpetual ignominy.” Softening, however, his tone, Galerius insinuated to the ambassador that it had never been the practice of the Romans to trample on a prostrate enemy; and that on this occasion they should consult their own dignity rather than the Persian merit. He dismissed Apherban with a hope that Narses would soon be informed on what conditions he might obtain, from the clemency of the emperors, a lasting peace, and the restoration of his wives and children. In this conference we may discover the fierce passions of Galerius, as well as his deference to the superior wisdom and authority of Diocletian. The ambition of the former grasped at the conquest of the East and had proposed to reduce Persia into the state of a province. The prudence of the latter, who adhered to the moderate policy of Augustus and the Antonines, embraced the favourable opportunity of terminating a successful war by an honourable and advantageous peace.[79](#)

In pursuance of their promise, the emperors soon afterwards appointed Sicorius Probus, one of their secretaries, to acquaint the Persian court with their final resolution. As the minister of peace, he was received with every mark of politeness and friendship; but, under the pretence of allowing him the necessary repose after so long a journey, the audience of Probus was deferred from day to day; and he attended the slow motions of the king, till at length he was admitted to his presence, near the river Asprudus in Media. The secret motive of Narses, in this delay, had been to collect such a military force as might enable him, though sincerely desirous of peace, to negotiate with the greater weight and dignity. Three persons only assisted at this important conference; the minister Apherban, the prefect of the guards, and an officer who had commanded on the Armenian frontier.⁸⁰ The first condition, proposed by the ambassador, is not at present of a very intelligible nature; that the city of Nisibis might be established for the place of mutual exchange, or, as we should formerly have termed it, for the staple of trade between the two empires. There is no difficulty in conceiving the intention of the Roman princes to improve their revenue by some restraints upon commerce; but, as Nisibis was situated within their own dominions, and as they were masters both of the imports and exports, it should seem that such restraints were the objects of an internal law rather than of a foreign treaty. To render them more effectual, some stipulations were probably required on the side of the king of Persia, which appeared so very repugnant either to his interest or to his dignity, that Narses could not be persuaded to subscribe them. As this was the only article to which he refused his consent, it was no longer insisted on; and the emperors either suffered the trade to flow in its natural channels, or contented themselves with such restrictions as it depended on their own authority to establish.

As soon as this difficulty was removed, a solemn peace was concluded and ratified between the two nations. The conditions of a treaty so glorious to the empire, and so necessary to Persia, may deserve a more peculiar attention, as the history of Rome presents very few transactions of a similar nature; most of her wars having either been terminated by absolute conquest, or waged against barbarians ignorant of the use of letters. I. The Aboras, or, as it is called by Xenophon, the Araxes, was fixed as the boundary between the two monarchies.⁸¹ That river, which rose near the Tigris, was increased, a few miles below Nisibis, by the little stream of the Mygdonius, passed under the walls of Singara, and fell into the Euphrates at Circesium, a frontier town, which, by the care of Diocletian, was very strongly fortified.⁸² Mesopotamia, the object of so many wars, was ceded to the empire; and the Persians, by this treaty, renounced all pretensions to that great province. II. They relinquished to the Romans five provinces beyond the Tigris.⁸³ Their situation formed a very useful barrier, and their natural strength was soon improved by art and military skill. Four of these, to the north of the river, were districts of obscure fame and inconsiderable extent: Intiline, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Moxoene; but, on the east of the Tigris, the empire acquired the large and mountainous territory of Carduene, the ancient seat of the Carduchians, who preserved for many ages their manly freedom in the heart of the despotic monarchies of Asia. The ten thousand Greeks traversed their country, after a painful march, or rather engagement, of seven days; and it is confessed by their leader, in his incomparable relation of the retreat, that they suffered more from the arrows of the Carduchians than from the power of the Great King.⁸⁴ Their posterity, the Curds, with very little alteration either of name or manners, acknowledged the

nominal sovereignty of the Turkish sultan. III. It is almost needless to observe that Tiridates, the faithful ally of Rome, was restored to the throne of his fathers, and that the rights of the Imperial supremacy were fully asserted and secured. The limits of Armenia were extended as far as the fortress of Sintha in Media, and this increase of dominion was not so much an act of liberality as of justice. Of the provinces already mentioned beyond the Tigris, the four first had been dismembered by the Parthians from the crown of Armenia;⁸⁵ and, when the Romans acquired the possession of them, they stipulated, at the expense of the usurpers, an ample compensation, which invested their ally with the extensive and fertile country of Atropatene. Its principal city, in the same situation perhaps as the modern Tauris, was frequently honoured with the residence of Tiridates; and, as it sometimes bore the name of Ecbatana, he imitated, in the buildings and fortifications, the splendid capital of the Medes.⁸⁶ IV. The country of Iberia was barren, its inhabitants rude and savage. But they were accustomed to the use of arms, and they separated from the empire barbarians much fiercer and more formidable than themselves. The narrow defiles of Mount Caucasus were in their hands, and it was in their choice either to admit or to exclude the wandering tribes of Sarmatia, whenever a rapacious spirit urged them to penetrate into the richer climates of the South.⁸⁷ The nomination of the kings of Iberia, which was resigned by the Persian monarch to the emperors, contributed to the strength and security of the Roman power in Asia.⁸⁸ The East enjoyed a profound tranquillity during forty years; and the treaty between the rival monarchies was strictly observed till the death of Tiridates; when a new generation, animated with different views and different passions, succeeded to the government of the world; and the grandson of Narses undertook a long and memorable war against the princes of the house of Constantine.

The arduous work of rescuing the distressed empire from tyrants and barbarians had now been completely achieved by a succession of Illyrian peasants. As soon as Diocletian entered into the twentieth year of his reign, he celebrated that memorable era, as well as the success of his arms, by the pomp of a Roman triumph.⁸⁹ Maximian, the equal partner of his power, was his only companion in the glory of that day. The two Cæsars had fought and conquered, but the merit of their exploits was ascribed, according to the rigour of ancient maxims, to the auspicious influence of their fathers and emperors.⁹⁰ The triumph of Diocletian and Maximian was less magnificent, perhaps, than those of Aurelian and Probus, but it was dignified by several circumstances of superior fame and good fortune. Africa and Britain, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, furnished their respective trophies; but the most distinguished ornament was of a more singular nature, a Persian victory followed by an important conquest.⁹¹ The representations of rivers, mountains, and provinces were carried before the Imperial car. The images of the captive wives, the sisters, and the children of the Great King afforded a new and grateful spectacle to the vanity of the people.⁹² In the eyes of posterity this triumph is remarkable by a distinction of a less honourable kind. It was the last that Rome ever beheld. Soon after this period, the emperors ceased to vanquish, and Rome ceased to be the capital of the empire.

The spot on which Rome was founded had been consecrated by ancient ceremonies and imaginary miracles. The presence of some god, or the memory of some hero, seemed to animate every part of the city, and the empire of the world had been

promised to the Capitol.⁹³ The native Romans felt and confessed the power of this agreeable illusion. It was derived from their ancestors, had grown up with their earliest habits of life, and was protected, in some measure, by the opinion of political utility. The form and the seat of government were intimately blended together, nor was it esteemed possible to transport the one without destroying the other.⁹⁴ But the sovereignty of the capital was gradually annihilated in the extent of conquest; the provinces rose to the same level, and the vanquished nations acquired the name and privileges, without imbibing the partial affections, of Romans. During a long period, however, the remains of the ancient constitution, and the influence of custom, preserved the dignity of Rome. The emperors, though perhaps of African or Illyrian extraction, respected their adopted country, as the seat of their power, and the centre of their extensive dominions. The emergencies of war very frequently required their presence on the frontiers; but Diocletian and Maximian were the first Roman princes who fixed, in time of peace, their ordinary residence in the provinces; and their conduct, however it might be suggested by private motives, was justified by very specious considerations of policy. The court of the emperor of the West was, for the most part, established at Milan, whose situation, at the foot of the Alps, appeared far more convenient than that of Rome, for the important purpose of watching the motions of the barbarians of Germany. Milan soon assumed the splendour of an Imperial city. The houses are described as numerous and well built; the manners of the people as polished and liberal. A circus, a theatre, a mint, a palace, baths, which bore the name of their founder Maximian; porticoes adorned with statues, and a double circumference of walls, contributed to the beauty of the new capital; nor did it seem oppressed even by the proximity of Rome.⁹⁵ To rival the majesty of Rome was the ambition likewise of Diocletian, who employed his leisure, and the wealth of the East, in the embellishment of Nicomedia, a city placed on the verge of Europe and Asia, almost at an equal distance between the Danube and the Euphrates. By the taste of the monarch, and at the expense of the people, Nicomedia acquired, in the space of a few years, a degree of magnificence which might appear to have required the labour of ages, and became inferior only to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, in extent or populousness.⁹⁶ The life of Diocletian and Maximian was a life of action, and a considerable portion of it was spent in camps, or in their long and frequent marches; but, whenever the public business allowed them any relaxation, they seem to have retired with pleasure to their favourite residences of Nicomedia and Milan. Till Diocletian, in the twentieth year of his reign, celebrated his Roman triumph, it is extremely doubtful whether he ever visited the ancient capital of the empire. Even on that memorable occasion his stay did not exceed two months. Disgusted with the licentious familiarity of the people, he quitted Rome with precipitation thirteen days before it was expected that he should have appeared in the senate, invested with the ensigns of the consular dignity.⁹⁷

The dislike expressed by Diocletian towards Rome and Roman freedom was not the effect of momentary caprice, but the result of the most artful policy. That crafty prince had framed a new system of Imperial government, which was afterwards completed by the family of Constantine, and, as the image of the old constitution was religiously preserved in the senate, he resolved to deprive that order of its small remains of power and consideration. We may recollect, about eight years before the elevation of Diocletian, the transient greatness, and the ambitious hopes, of the Roman senate. As

long as that enthusiasm prevailed, many of the nobles imprudently displayed their zeal in the cause of freedom; and, after the successors of Probus had withdrawn their countenance from the republican party, the senators were unable to disguise their impotent resentment. As the sovereign of Italy, Maximian was entrusted with the care of extinguishing this troublesome, rather than dangerous, spirit, and the task was perfectly suited to his cruel temper. The most illustrious members of the senate, whom Diocletian always affected to esteem, were involved, by his colleague, in the accusation of imaginary plots; and the possession of an elegant villa, or a well-cultivated estate, was interpreted as a convincing evidence of guilt.⁹⁸ The camp of the Prætorians, which had so long oppressed, began to protect, the majesty of Rome; and as those haughty troops were conscious of the decline of their power, they were naturally disposed to unite their strength with the authority of the senate. By the prudent measures of Diocletian, the numbers of the Prætorians were insensibly reduced, their privileges abolished,⁹⁹ and their place supplied by two faithful legions of Illyricum, who, under the new titles of Jovians and Herculians, were appointed to perform the service of the Imperial guards.¹⁰⁰ But the most fatal though secret wound, which the senate received from the hands of Diocletian and Maximian, was inflicted by the inevitable operation of their absence. As long as the emperors resided at Rome, that assembly might be oppressed, but it could scarcely be neglected. The successors of Augustus exercised the power of dictating whatever laws their wisdom or caprice might suggest; but those laws were ratified by the sanction of the senate. The model of ancient freedom was preserved in its deliberations and decrees; and wise princes, who respected the prejudices of the Roman people, were in some measure obliged to assume the language and behaviour suitable to the general and first magistrate of the republic. In the armies and in the provinces, they displayed the dignity of monarchs; and, when they fixed their residence at a distance from the capital, they for ever laid aside the dissimulation which Augustus had recommended to his successors. In the exercise of the legislative as well as of the executive power, the sovereign advised with his ministers, instead of consulting the great council of the nation. The name of the senate was mentioned with honour till the last period of the empire; the vanity of its members was still flattered with honorary distinctions;¹⁰¹ but the assembly, which had so long been the source, and so long the instrument, of power, was respectfully suffered to sink into oblivion. The senate of Rome, losing all connection with the Imperial court and the actual constitution, was left a venerable but useless monument of antiquity on the Capitoline hill.

When the Roman princes had lost sight of the senate and of their ancient capital, they easily forgot the origin and nature of their legal power. The civil offices of consul, of proconsul, of censor, and of tribune, by the union of which it had been formed, betrayed to the people its republican extraction. Those modest titles were laid aside;¹⁰² and, if they still distinguished their high station by the appellation of Emperor, or Imperator, that word was understood in a new and more dignified sense, and no longer denoted the general of the Roman armies, but the sovereign of the Roman world. The name of Emperor, which was at first of a military nature, was associated with another of a more servile kind. The epithet of Dominus, or Lord, in its primitive signification, was expressive, not of the authority of a prince over his subjects, or of a commander over his soldiers, but of the despotic power of a master over his domestic slaves.¹⁰³ Viewing it in that odious light, it had been rejected with

abhorrence by the first Cæsars. Their resistance insensibly became more feeble, and the name less odious; till at length the style of *our Lord and Emperor* was not only bestowed by flattery, but was regularly admitted into the laws and public monuments. Such lofty epithets were sufficient to elate and satisfy the most excessive vanity; and, if the successors of Diocletian still declined the title of King, it seems to have been the effect not so much of their moderation as of their delicacy. Wherever the Latin tongue was in use (and it was the language of government throughout the empire), the Imperial title, as it was peculiar to themselves, conveyed a more respectable idea than the name of King, which they must have shared with an hundred barbarian chieftains; or which, at the best, they could derive only from Romulus or from Tarquin. But the sentiments of the East were very different from those of the West. From the earliest period of history, the sovereigns of Asia had been celebrated in the Greek language by the title of Basileus, or King; and since it was considered as the first distinction among men, it was soon employed by the servile provincials of the East in their humble addresses to the Roman throne.¹⁰⁴ Even the attributes, or at least the titles, of the Divinity were usurped by Diocletian and Maximian, who transmitted them to a succession of Christian emperors.¹⁰⁵ Such extravagant compliments, however, soon lose their impiety by losing their meaning; and when the ear is once accustomed to the sound, they are heard with indifference as vague though excessive professions of respect.

From the time of Augustus to that of Diocletian, the Roman princes, conversing in a familiar manner among their fellow-citizens, were saluted only with the same respect that was usually paid to senators and magistrates. Their principal distinction was the Imperial or military robe of purple; whilst the senatorial garment was marked by a broad, and the equestrian by a narrow, band or stripe of the same honourable colour. The pride, or rather the policy, of Diocletian engaged that artful prince to introduce the stately magnificence of the court of Persia.¹⁰⁶ He ventured to assume the diadem, an ornament detested by the Romans as the odious ensign of royalty, and the use of which had been considered as the most desperate act of the madness of Caligula.¹⁰⁷ It was no more than a broad white fillet set with pearls, which encircled the emperor's head. The sumptuous robes of Diocletian and his successors were of silk and gold; and it is remarked, with indignation, that even their shoes were studded with the most precious gems. The access to their sacred person was every day rendered more difficult, by the institution of new forms and ceremonies. The avenues of the palace were strictly guarded by the various *schools*, as they began to be called, of domestic officers. The interior apartments were entrusted to the jealous vigilance of the eunuchs; the increase of whose numbers and influence was the most infallible symptom of the progress of despotism. When a subject was at length admitted to the Imperial presence, he was obliged, whatever might be his rank, to fall prostrate on the ground, and to adore, according to the Eastern fashion, the divinity of his lord and master.¹⁰⁸ Diocletian was a man of sense, who, in the course of private as well as public life, had formed a just estimate both of himself and of mankind: nor is it easy to conceive that, in substituting the manners of Persia to those of Rome, he was seriously actuated by so mean a principle as that of vanity. He flattered himself that an ostentation of splendour and luxury would subdue the imagination of the multitude; that the monarch would be less exposed to the rude licence of the people and the soldiers, as his person was secluded from the public view; and that habits of

submission would insensibly be productive of sentiments of veneration. Like the modesty affected by Augustus, the state maintained by Diocletian was a theatrical representation; but it must be confessed that, of the two comedies, the former was of a much more liberal and manly character than the latter. It was the aim of the one to disguise, and the object of the other to display, the unbounded power which the emperors possessed over the Roman world.

Ostentation was the first principle of the new system instituted by Diocletian. The second was division. He divided the empire, the provinces, and every branch of the civil as well as military administration. He multiplied the wheels of the machine of government, and rendered its operations less rapid but more secure. Whatever advantages, and whatever defects, might attend these innovations, they must be ascribed in a very great degree to the first inventor; but, as the new frame of policy was gradually improved and completed by succeeding princes, it will be more satisfactory to delay the consideration of it till the season of its full maturity and perfection.¹⁰⁹ Reserving, therefore, for the reign of Constantine a more exact picture of the new empire, we shall content ourselves with describing the principal and decisive outline, as it was traced by the hand of Diocletian. He had associated three colleagues in the exercise of the supreme power; and, as he was convinced that the abilities of a single man were inadequate to the public defence, he considered the joint administration of four princes not as a temporary expedient, but as a fundamental law of the constitution. It was his intention that the two elder princes should be distinguished by the use of the diadem, and the title of *Augusti*: that, as affection or esteem might direct their choice, they should regularly call to their assistance two subordinate colleagues; and that the *Cæsars*, rising in their turn to the first rank, should supply an uninterrupted succession of emperors. The empire was divided into four parts. The East and Italy were the most honourable, the Danube and the Rhine the most laborious stations. The former claimed the presence of the *Augusti*, the latter were entrusted to the administration of the *Cæsars*. The strength of the legions was in the hands of the four partners of sovereignty, and the despair of successively vanquishing four formidable rivals might intimidate the ambition of an aspiring general. In their civil government, the emperors were supposed to exercise the undivided power of the monarch, and their edicts, inscribed with their joint names, were received in all the provinces, as promulgated by their mutual councils and authority.¹¹⁰ Notwithstanding these precautions, the political union of the Roman world was gradually dissolved, and a principle of division was introduced, which, in the course of a few years, occasioned the perpetual separation of the Eastern and Western empires.

The system of Diocletian was accompanied with another very material disadvantage, which cannot even at present be totally overlooked: a more expensive establishment, and consequently an increase of taxes, and the oppression of the people. Instead of a modest family of slaves and freedmen, such as had contended the simple greatness of Augustus and Trajan, three or four magnificent courts were established in the various parts of the empire, and as many Roman *kings* contended with each other and with the Persian monarch for the vain superiority of pomp and luxury. The number of ministers, of magistrates, of officers, and of servants, who filled the different departments of the state, was multiplied beyond the example of former times; and (if

we may borrow the warm expression of a contemporary) “when the proportion of those who received exceeded the proportion of those who contributed, the provinces were oppressed by the weight of tributes.”[111](#) From this period to the extinction of the empire, it would be easy to deduce an uninterrupted series of clamours and complaints. According to his religion and situation, each writer chooses either Diocletian, or Constantine, or Valens, or Theodosius, for the object of his invectives; but they unanimously agree in representing the burden of the public impositions, and particularly the land-tax and capitation, as the intolerable and increasing grievance of their own times. From such a concurrence, an impartial historian, who is obliged to extract truth from satire as well as from panegyric, will be inclined to divide the blame among the princes whom they accuse, and to ascribe their exactions much less to their personal vices than to the uniform system of their administration. The emperor Diocletian was, indeed, the author of that system; but during his reign the growing evil was confined within the bounds of modesty and discretion, and he deserves the reproach of establishing pernicious precedents, rather than of exercising actual oppression.[112](#) It may be added, that his revenues were managed with prudent economy; and that, after all the current expenses were discharged, there still remained in the Imperial treasury an ample position either for judicious liberality or for any emergency of the state.

It was in the twenty-first year of his reign that Diocletian executed his memorable resolution of abdicating the empire; an action more naturally to have been expected from the elder or the younger Antoninus, than from a prince who had never practised the lessons of philosophy either in the attainment or in the use of supreme power. Diocletian acquired the glory of giving to the world the first example of a resignation,[113](#) which has not been very frequently imitated by succeeding monarchs. The parallel of Charles the Fifth, however, will naturally offer itself to our mind, not only since the eloquence of a modern historian has rendered that name so familiar to an English reader, but from the very striking resemblance between the characters of the two emperors, whose political abilities were superior to their military genius, and whose specious virtues were much less the effect of nature than of art. The abdication of Charles appears to have been hastened by the vicissitude of fortune; and the disappointment of his favourite schemes urged him to relinquish a power which he found inadequate to his ambition. But the reign of Diocletian had flowed with a tide of uninterrupted success; nor was it till after he had vanquished all his enemies, and accomplished all his designs, that he seems to have entertained any serious thoughts of resigning the empire. Neither Charles nor Diocletian was arrived at a very advanced period of life; since the one was only fifty-five, and the other was no more than fifty-nine, years of age; but the active life of those princes, their wars and journeys, the cares of royalty, and their application to business had already impaired their constitution, and brought on the infirmities of a premature old age.[114](#)

Notwithstanding the severity of a very cold and rainy winter, Diocletian left Italy soon after the ceremony of his triumph, and began his progress towards the East round the circuit of the Illyrian provinces. From the inclemency of the weather, and the fatigue of the journey, he soon contracted a slow illness; and, though he made easy marches, and was generally carried in a close litter, his disorder, before he arrived at Nicomedia, about the end of the summer, was become very serious and alarming.

During the whole winter he was confined to his palace; his danger inspired a general and unaffected concern; but the people could only judge of the various alterations of his health from the joy or consternation which they discovered in the countenances and behaviour of his attendants. The rumour of his death was for some time universally believed, and it was supposed to be concealed with a view to prevent the troubles that might have happened during the absence of the Cæsar Galerius. At length, however, on the first of March, Diocletian once more appeared in public, but so pale and emaciated that he could scarcely have been recognised by those to whom his person was the most familiar. It was time to put an end to the painful struggle, which he had sustained during more than a year, between the care of his health and that of his dignity. The former required indulgence and relaxation, the latter compelled him to direct, from the bed of sickness, the administration of a great empire. He resolved to pass the remainder of his days in honourable repose, to place his glory beyond the reach of fortune, and to relinquish the theatre of the world to his younger and more active associates.[115](#)

The ceremony of his abdication was performed in a spacious plain, about three miles from Nicomedia. The emperor ascended a lofty throne, and in a speech, full of reason and dignity, declared his intention, both to the people and to the soldiers who were assembled on this extraordinary occasion. As soon as he had divested himself of the purple, he withdrew from the gazing multitude, and, traversing the city in a covered chariot, proceeded, without delay, to the favourite retirement which he had chosen in his native country of Dalmatia. On the same day, which was the first of May,[116](#) Maximian, as it had been previously concerted, made his resignation of the Imperial dignity at Milan. Even in the splendour of the Roman triumph, Diocletian had meditated his design of abdicating the government. As he wished to secure the obedience of Maximian, he exacted from him either a general assurance that he would submit his actions to the authority of his benefactor, or a particular promise that he would descend from the throne, whenever he should receive the advice and the example. This engagement, though it was confirmed by the solemnity of an oath before the altar of the Capitoline Jupiter,[117](#) would have proved a feeble restraint on the fierce temper of Maximian, whose passion was the love of power, and who neither desired present tranquillity nor future reputation. But he yielded, however reluctantly, to the ascendant which his wiser colleague had acquired over him, and retired, immediately after his abdication, to a villa in Lucania, where it was almost impossible that such an impatient spirit could find any lasting tranquillity.

Diocletian, who, from a servile origin, had raised himself to the throne, passed the nine last years of his life in a private condition. Reason had dictated, and content seems to have accompanied, his retreat, in which he enjoyed for a long time the respect of those princes to whom he had resigned the possession of the world.[118](#) It is seldom that minds long exercised in business have formed any habits of conversing with themselves, and in the loss of power they principally regret the want of occupation. The amusements of letters and of devotion, which afford so many resources in solitude, were incapable of fixing the attention of Diocletian; but he had preserved, or at least he soon recovered, a taste for the most innocent as well as natural pleasures; and his leisure hours were sufficiently employed in building, planting, and gardening. His answer to Maximian is deservedly celebrated. He was

solicited by that restless old man to reassume the reins of government and the Imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing that, if he could show Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power.¹¹⁹ In his conversations with his friends, he frequently acknowledged that, of all arts, the most difficult was the art of reigning; and he expressed himself on that favourite topic with a degree of warmth which could be the result only of experience. “How often,” was he accustomed to say, “is it the interest of four or five ministers to combine together to deceive their sovereign! Secluded from mankind by his exalted dignity, the truth is concealed from his knowledge; he can see only with their eyes, he hears nothing but their misrepresentations. He confers the most important offices upon vice and weakness, and disgraces the most virtuous and deserving among his subjects. By such infamous arts,” added Diocletian, “the best and wisest princes are sold to the venal corruption of their courtiers.”¹²⁰ A just estimate of greatness, and the assurance of immortal fame, improve our relish for the pleasures of retirement; but the Roman emperor had filled too important a character in the world to enjoy without alloy the comforts and security of a private condition. It was impossible that he could remain ignorant of the troubles which afflicted the empire after his abdication. It was impossible that he could be indifferent to their consequences. Fear, sorrow and discontent sometimes pursued him into the solitude of Salona. His tenderness, or at least his pride, was deeply wounded by the misfortunes of his wife and daughter; and the last moments of Diocletian were embittered by some affronts, which Licinius and Constantine might have spared the father of so many emperors, and the first author of their own fortune. A report, though of a very doubtful nature, has reached our times, that he prudently withdrew himself from their power by a voluntary death.¹²¹

Before we dismiss the consideration of the life and character of Diocletian, we may, for a moment, direct our view to the place of his retirement. Salona, a principal city of his native province of Dalmatia, was near two hundred Roman miles (according to the measurement of the public highways) from Aquileia and the confines of Italy, and about two hundred and seventy from Sirmium, the usual residence of the emperors whenever they visited the Illyrian frontier.¹²² A miserable village still preserves the name of Salona, but so late as the sixteenth century, the remains of a theatre, and a confused prospect of broken arches and marble columns, continued to attest its ancient splendour.¹²³ About six or seven miles from the city, Diocletian constructed a magnificent palace, and we may infer from the greatness of the work, how long he had meditated his design of abdicating the empire. The choice of a spot which united all that could contribute either to health or to luxury did not require the partiality of a native. “The soil was dry and fertile, the air is pure and wholesome, and, though extremely hot during the summer months, this country seldom feels those sultry and noxious winds to which the coast of Istria and some parts of Italy are exposed. The views from the palace are no less beautiful than the soil and climate were inviting. Towards the west lies the fertile shore that stretches along the Hadriatic, in which a number of small islands are scattered in such a manner as to give this part of the sea the appearance of a great lake. On the north side lies the bay, which led to the ancient city of Salona, and the country beyond it, appearing in sight, forms a proper contrast to that more extensive prospect of water, which the Hadriatic presents both to the

south and to the east. Towards the north, the view is terminated by high and irregular mountains, situated at a proper distance, and, in many places, covered with villages, woods and vineyards.”[124](#)

Though Constantine, from a very obvious prejudice, affects to mention the palace of Diocletian with contempt,[125](#) yet one of their successors, who could only see it in a neglected and mutilated state, celebrates its magnificence in terms of the highest admiration.[126](#) It covered an extent of ground consisting of between nine and ten English acres. The form was quadrangular, flanked with sixteen towers. Two of the sides were near six hundred, and the other two near seven hundred, feet in length. The whole was constructed of a beautiful freestone, extracted from the neighbouring quarries of Trau or Tragutium,[127](#) and very little inferior to marble itself. Four streets, intersecting each other at right angles, divided the several parts of this great edifice, and the approach to the principal apartment was from a very stately entrance, which is still denominated the Golden Gate. The approach was terminated by a *peristylum* of granite columns, on one side of which we discover the square temple of Æsculapius, on the other the octagon temple of Jupiter. The latter of those deities Diocletian revered as the patron of his fortunes, the former as the protector of his health. By comparing the present remains with the precepts of Vitruvius, the several parts of the building, the baths, bedchamber, the *atrium*, the *basilica*, and the Cyzicene, Corinthian, and Egyptian halls have been described with some degree of precision, or at least of probability. Their forms were various, their proportions just, but they were all attended with two imperfections, very repugnant to our modern notions of taste and conveniency. These stately rooms had neither windows nor chimneys. They were lighted from the top (for the building seems to have consisted of no more than one storey), and they received their heat by the help of pipes that were conveyed along the walls. The range of principal apartments was protected towards the south-west by a portico five hundred and seventeen feet long, which must have formed a very noble and delightful walk, when the beauties of painting and sculpture were added to those of the prospect.

Had this magnificent edifice remained in a solitary country, it would have been exposed to the ravages of time; but it might, perhaps, have escaped the rapacious industry of man. The village of Aspalathus,[128](#) and, long afterwards, the provincial town of Spalatro, have grown out of its ruins. The Golden Gate now opens into the market place. St. John the Baptist has usurped the honours of Æsculapius; and the temple of Jupiter, under the protection of the Virgin, is converted into the cathedral church. For this account of Diocletian’s palace we are principally indebted to an ingenious artist of our own time and country, whom a very liberal curiosity carried into the heart of Dalmatia.[129](#) But there is room to suspect that the elegance of his designs and engraving has somewhat flattered the objects which it was their purpose to represent. We are informed by a more recent and very judicious traveller that the awful ruins of Spalatro are not less expressive of the decline of the arts than of the greatness of the Roman empire in the time of Diocletian.[130](#) If such was indeed the state of architecture, we must naturally believe that painting and sculpture had experienced a still more sensible decay. The practice of architecture is directed by a few general and even mechanical rules. But sculpture, and, above all, painting, propose to themselves the imitation not only of the forms of nature, but of the

characters and passions of the human soul. In those sublime arts, the dexterity of the hand is of little avail, unless it is animated by fancy and guided by the most correct taste and observation.

It is almost unnecessary to remark that the civil distractions of the empire, the licence of the soldiers, the inroads of the barbarians, and the progress of despotism had proved very unfavourable to genius, and even to learning. The succession of Illyrian princes restored the empire, without restoring the sciences. Their military education was not calculated to inspire them with the love of letters; and even the mind of Diocletian, however active and capacious in business, was totally uninformed by study or speculation. The professions of law and physic are of such common use and certain profit that they will always secure a sufficient number of practitioners endowed with a reasonable degree of abilities and knowledge; but it does not appear that the students in those two faculties appeal to any celebrated masters who have flourished within that period. The voice of poetry was silent. History was reduced to dry and confused abridgments, alike destitute of amusement and instruction. A languid and affected eloquence was still retained in the pay and service of the emperors, who encouraged not any arts except those which contributed to the gratification of their pride or the defence of their power.[131](#)

The declining age of learning and of mankind is marked, however, by the rise and rapid progress of the new Platonists. The school of Alexandria silenced those of Athens; and the ancient sects enrolled themselves under the banners of the more fashionable teachers, who recommended their system by the novelty of their method and the austerity of their manners. Several of these masters, Ammonius, Plotinus, Amelius, and Porphyry,[132](#) were men of profound thought and intense application; but, by mistaking the true object of philosophy, their labours contributed much less to improve than to corrupt the human understanding. The knowledge that is suited to our situation and powers, the whole compass of moral, natural, and mathematical science, was neglected by the new Platonists, whilst they exhausted their strength in the verbal disputes of metaphysics, attempted to explore the secrets of the invisible world, and studied to reconcile Aristotle with Plato, on subjects of which both these philosophers were as ignorant as the rest of mankind. Consuming their reason in these deep but unsubstantial meditations, their minds were exposed to illusions of fancy. They flattered themselves that they possessed the secret of disengaging the soul from its corporeal prison; claimed a familiar intercourse with demons and spirits; and, by a very singular revolution, converted the study of philosophy into that of magic. The ancient sages had derided the popular superstition; after disguising its extravagance by the thin pretence of allegory, the disciplines of Plotinus and Porphyry became its most zealous defenders. As they agreed with the Christians in a few mysterious points of faith, they attacked the remainder of their theological system with all the fury of civil war. The new Platonists would scarcely deserve a place in the history of science, but in that of the church the mention of them will very frequently occur.

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CHAPTER XIV

Troubles after the abdication of Diocletian — Death of Constantius — Elevation of Constantine and Maxentius — Six Emperors at the same time — Death of Maximian and Galerius — Victories of Constantine over Maxentius and Licinius — Reunion of the Empire under the authority of Constantine

The balance of power established by Diocletian subsisted no longer than while it was sustained by the firm and dexterous hand of the founder. It required such a fortunate mixture of different tempers and abilities as could scarcely be found, or even expected, a second time; two emperors without jealousy, two Cæsars without ambition, and the same general interest invariably pursued by four independent princes. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian was succeeded by eighteen years of discord and confusion. The empire was afflicted by five civil wars; and the remainder of the time was not so much a state of tranquillity as a suspension of arms between several hostile monarchs, who, viewing each other with an eye of fear and hatred, strove to increase their respective forces at the expense of their subjects.

As soon as Diocletian and Maximian had resigned the purple, their station, according to the rules of the new constitution, was filled by the two Cæsars, Constantius and Galerius, who immediately assumed the title of Augustus.¹ The honours of seniority and precedence were allowed to the former of those princes, and he continued, under a new appellation, to administer his ancient department of Gaul, Spain,² and Britain. The government of those ample provinces was sufficient to exercise his talents, and to satisfy his ambition. Clemency, temperance, and moderation distinguished the amiable character of Constantius, and his fortunate subjects had frequently occasion to compare the virtues of their sovereign with the passions of Maximian, and even with the arts of Diocletian.³ Instead of imitating their Eastern pride and magnificence, Constantius preserved the modesty of a Roman prince. He declared, with unaffected sincerity, that his most valued treasure was in the hearts of his people, and that, whenever the dignity of the throne or the danger of the state required any extraordinary supply, he could depend with confidence on their gratitude and liberality.⁴ The provincials of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, sensible of his worth and of their own happiness, reflected with anxiety on the declining health of the emperor Constantius, and the tender age of his numerous family, the issue of his second marriage with the daughter of Maximian.

The stern temper of Galerius was cast in a very different mould; and, while he commanded the esteem of his subjects, he seldom condescended to solicit their affections. His fame in arms, and, above all, the success of the Persian war, had elated his haughty mind, which was naturally impatient of a superior, or even of an equal. If it were possible to rely on the partial testimony of an injudicious writer, we might ascribe the abdication of Diocletian to the menaces of Galerius, and relate the particulars of a *private* conversation between the two princes, in which the former discovered as much pusillanimity as the latter displayed ingratitude and arrogance.⁵ But these obscure anecdotes are sufficiently refuted by an impartial view of the

character and conduct of Diocletian. Whatever might otherwise have been his intentions, if he had apprehended any danger from the violence of Galerius, his good sense would have instructed him to prevent the ignominious contest; and, as he had held the sceptre with glory, he would have resigned it without disgrace.

After the elevation of Constantius and Galerius to the rank of *Augusti*, two new *Cæsars* were required to supply their place, and to complete the system of the Imperial government. Diocletian was sincerely desirous of withdrawing himself from the world; he considered Galerius, who had married his daughter, as the firmest support of his family and of the empire; and he consented, without reluctance, that his successor should assume the merit as well as the envy of the important nomination. It was fixed without consulting the interest or inclination of the princes of the West. Each of them had a son who was arrived at the age of manhood, and who might have been deemed the most natural candidates for the vacant honour. But the impotent resentment of Maximian was no longer to be dreaded, and the moderate Constantius, though he might despise the dangers, was humanely apprehensive of the calamities, of civil war. The two persons whom Galerius promoted to the rank of *Cæsar* were much better suited to serve the views of his ambition; and their principal recommendation seems to have consisted in the want of merit or personal consequence. The first of these was Daza, or, as he was afterwards called, Maximin,⁶ whose mother was the sister of Galerius. The unexperienced youth still betrayed by his manners and language his rustic education, when, to his own astonishment as well as that of the world, he was invested by Diocletian with the purple, exalted to the dignity of *Cæsar*, and entrusted with the sovereign command of Egypt and Syria.⁷ At the same time, Severus, a faithful servant, addicted to pleasure, but not incapable of business, was sent to Milan, to receive from the reluctant hands of Maximian the *Cæsarean* ornaments, and the possession of Italy and Africa.⁸ According to the forms of the constitution, Severus acknowledged the supremacy of the Western emperor; but he was absolutely devoted to the commands of his benefactor Galerius, who, reserving to himself the intermediate countries from the confines of Italy to those of Syria, firmly established his power over three-fourths of the monarchy. In the full confidence that the approaching death of Constantius would leave him sole master of the Roman world, we are assured that he had arranged in his mind a long succession of future princes, and that he meditated his own retreat from public life after he should have accomplished a glorious reign of about twenty years.⁹

But, within less than eighteen months, two unexpected revolutions overturned the ambitious schemes of Galerius. The hopes of uniting the Western provinces to his empire were disappointed by the elevation of Constantine; whilst Italy and Africa were lost by the successful revolt of Maxentius.

I. The fame of Constantine has rendered posterity attentive to the most minute circumstances of his life and actions. The place of his birth, as well as the condition of his mother Helena, have been the subject not only of literary but of national disputes. Notwithstanding the recent tradition, which assigns for her father a British king, we are obliged to confess that Helena was the daughter of an innkeeper;¹⁰ but at the same time we may defend the legality of her marriage against those who have represented her as the concubine of Constantius.¹¹ The great Constantine was most

probably born at Naissus, in Dacia,¹² and it is not surprising that, in a family and province distinguished only by the profession of arms, the youth should discover very little inclination to improve his mind by the acquisition of knowledge.¹³ He was about eighteen years of age when his father was promoted to the rank of Cæsar; but that fortunate event was attended with his mother's divorce; and the splendour of an Imperial alliance reduced the son of Helena to a state of disgrace and humiliation. Instead of following Constantius in the West, he remained in the service of Diocletian, signalled his valour in the wars of Egypt and Persia, and gradually rose to the honourable station of a tribune of the first order. The figure of Constantine was tall and majestic; he was dexterous in all his exercises, intrepid in war, affable in peace; in his whole conduct the active spirit of youth was tempered by habitual prudence; and, while his mind was engrossed by ambition, he appeared cold and insensible to the allurements of pleasure. The favour of the people and soldiers, who had named him as a worthy candidate for the rank of Cæsar, served only to exasperate the jealousy of Galerius; and, though prudence might restrain him from exercising any open violence, an absolute monarch is seldom at a loss how to execute a sure and secret revenge.¹⁴ Every hour increased the danger of Constantine and the anxiety of his father, who, by repeated letters, expressed the warmest desire of embracing his son. For some time the policy of Galerius supplied him with delays and excuses, but it was impossible long to refuse so natural a request of his associate, without maintaining his refusal by arms. The permission for the journey was reluctantly granted, and, whatever precautions the emperor might have taken to intercept a return, the consequences of which he, with so much reason, apprehended, they were effectually disappointed by the incredible diligence of Constantine.¹⁵ Leaving the palace of Nicomedia in the night, he travelled post through Bithynia, Thrace, Dacia, Pannonia, Italy, and Gaul, and, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, reached the port of Boulogne in the very moment when his father was preparing to embark for Britain.¹⁶

The British expedition, and an easy victory over the barbarians of Caledonia, were the last exploits of the reign of Constantius. He ended his life in the Imperial palace of York, fifteen months after he had assumed the title of Augustus, and almost fourteen years and a half after he had been promoted to the rank of Cæsar.¹⁷ His death was immediately succeeded by the elevation of Constantine. The ideas of inheritance and succession are so very familiar that the generality of mankind consider them as founded, not only in reason, but in nature itself. Our imagination readily transfers the same principles from private property to public dominion: and, whenever a virtuous father leaves behind him a son whose merit seems to justify the esteem, or even the hopes, of the people, the joint influence of prejudice and of affection operates with irresistible weight. The flower of the Western armies had followed Constantius into Britain, and the national troops were reinforced by a numerous body of Alemanni, who obeyed the orders of Crocus, one of their hereditary chieftains.¹⁸ The opinion of their own importance, and the assurance that Britain, Gaul, and Spain¹⁹ would acquiesce in their nomination, were diligently inculcated to the legions by the adherents of Constantine. The soldiers were asked, Whether they could hesitate a moment between the honour of placing at their head the worthy son of their beloved emperor and the ignominy of tamely expecting the arrival of some obscure stranger, on whom it might please the sovereign of Asia to bestow the armies and provinces of

the West. It was insinuated to them that gratitude and liberality held a distinguished place among the virtues of Constantine; nor did that artful prince show himself to the troops, till they were prepared to salute him with the names of Augustus and Emperor. The throne was the object of his desires; and, had he been less actuated by ambition, it was his only means of safety. He was well acquainted with the character and sentiments of Galerius, and sufficiently apprised that, if he wished to live, he must determine to reign. The decent and even obstinate resistance which he chose to affect²⁰ was contrived to justify his usurpation; nor did he yield to the acclamations of the army, till he had provided the proper materials for a letter, which he immediately despatched to the emperor of the East. Constantine informed him of the melancholy event of his father's death, modestly asserted his natural claim to the succession, and respectfully lamented that the affectionate violence of his troops had not permitted him to solicit the Imperial purple in the regular and constitutional manner. The first emotions of Galerius were those of surprise, disappointment, and rage; and, as he could seldom restrain his passions, he loudly threatened that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger. But his resentment insensibly subsided; and, when he recollected the doubtful chance of war, when he had weighed the character and strength of his adversary, he consented to embrace the honourable accommodation which the prudence of Constantine had left open to him. Without either condemning or ratifying the choice of the British army, Galerius accepted the son of his deceased colleague as the sovereign of the provinces beyond the Alps; but he gave him only the title of Cæsar, and the fourth rank among the Roman princes, whilst he conferred the vacant place of Augustus on his favourite Severus. The apparent harmony of the empire was still preserved, and Constantine, who already possessed the substance, expected, without impatience, an opportunity of obtaining the honours, of supreme power.²¹

The children of Constantius by his second marriage were six in number, three of either sex, and whose Imperial descent might have solicited a preference over the meaner extraction of the son of Helena. But Constantine was in the thirty-second year of his age, in the full vigour both of mind and body, at the time when the eldest of his brothers could not possibly be more than thirteen years old. His claim of superior merit had been allowed and ratified by the dying emperor.²² In his last moments Constantius bequeathed to his eldest son the care of the safety, as well as greatness, of the family; conjuring him to assume both the authority and the sentiments of a father with regard to the children of Theodora. Their liberal education, advantageous marriages, the secure dignity of their lives, and the first honours of the state with which they were invested, attest the fraternal affection of Constantine; and, as those princes possessed a mild and grateful disposition, they submitted without reluctance to the superiority of his genius and fortune.²³

II. The ambitious spirit of Galerius was scarcely reconciled to the disappointment of his views upon the Gallic provinces, before the unexpected loss of Italy wounded his pride as well as power in a still more sensible part. The long absence of the emperors had filled Rome with discontent and indignation; and the people gradually discovered that the preference given to Nicomedia and Milan was not to be ascribed to the particular inclination of Diocletian, but to the permanent form of government which he had instituted. It was in vain that, a few months after his abdication, his successors

dedicated, under his name, those magnificent baths, whose ruins still supply the ground as well as the materials for so many churches and convents.²⁴ The tranquillity of those elegant recesses of ease and luxury was disturbed by the impatient murmurs of the Romans; and a report was insensibly circulated that the sums expended in erecting those buildings would soon be required at their hands. About that time the avarice of Galerius, or perhaps the exigencies of the state, had induced him to make a very strict and rigorous inquisition into the property of his subjects for the purpose of a general taxation, both on their lands and on their persons. A very minute survey appears to have been taken of their real estates; and, wherever there was the slightest suspicion of concealment, torture was very freely employed to obtain a sincere declaration of their personal wealth.²⁵ The privileges which had exalted Italy above the rank of the provinces were no longer regarded: and the officers of the revenue already began to number the Roman people, and to settle the proportion of the new taxes. Even when the spirit of freedom had been utterly extinguished, the tamest subjects have sometimes ventured to resist an unprecedented invasion of their property; but on this occasion the injury was aggravated by the insult, and the sense of private interest was quickened by that of national honour. The conquest of Macedonia, as we have already observed, had delivered the Roman people from the weight of personal taxes. Though they had experienced every form of despotism, they had now enjoyed that exemption near five hundred years; nor could they patiently brook the insolence of an Illyrian peasant, who, from his distant residence in Asia, presumed to number Rome among the tributary cities of his empire. The rising fury of the people was encouraged by the authority, or at least the connivance, of the senate; and the feeble remains of the Prætorian guards, who had reason to apprehend their own dissolution, embraced so honourable a pretence, and declared their readiness to draw their swords in the service of their oppressed country. It was the wish, and it soon became the hope, of every citizen, that, after expelling from Italy their foreign tyrants, they should elect a prince who, by the place of his residence, and by his maxims of government, might once more deserve the title of Roman emperor. The name as well as the situation of Maxentius determined in his favour the popular enthusiasm.

Maxentius was the son of the emperor Maximian, and he had married the daughter of Galerius. His birth and alliance seemed to offer him the fairest promise of succeeding to the empire; but his vices and incapacity procured him the same exclusion from the dignity of Cæsar which Constantine had deserved by a dangerous superiority of merit. The policy of Galerius preferred such associates as would never disgrace the choice, nor dispute the commands, of their benefactors. An obscure stranger was therefore raised to the throne of Italy, and the son of the late emperor of the West was left to enjoy the luxury of a private fortune in a villa a few miles distant from the capital. The gloomy passions of his soul, shame, vexation, and rage, were inflamed by envy on the news of Constantine's success; but the hopes of Maxentius revived with the public discontent, and he was easily persuaded to unite his personal injury and pretensions with the cause of the Roman people. Two Prætorian tribunes and a commissary of provisions undertook the management of the conspiracy; and, as every order of men was actuated by the same spirit, the immediate event was neither doubtful nor difficult. The prefect of the city and a few magistrates, who maintained their fidelity to Severus, were massacred by the guards; and Maxentius, invested with

the Imperial ornaments, was acknowledged by the applauding senate and people as the protector of the Roman freedom and dignity.²⁶ It is uncertain whether Maximian was previously acquainted with the conspiracy; but, as soon as the standard of rebellion was erected at Rome, the old emperor broke from the retirement where the authority of Diocletian had condemned him to pass a life of melancholy solitude, and concealed his returning ambition under the disguise of paternal tenderness. At the request of his son and of the senate, he condescended to reassume the purple. His ancient dignity, his experience, and his fame in arms added strength as well as reputation to the party of Maxentius.²⁷

According to the advice, or rather the orders, of his colleague, the emperor Severus immediately hastened to Rome, in the full confidence that, by his unexpected celerity, he should easily suppress the tumult of an unwarlike populace, commanded by a licentious youth. But he found on his arrival the gates of the city shut against him, the walls filled with men and arms, an experienced general at the head of the rebels, and his own troops without spirit or affection. A large body of Moors deserted to the enemy, allured by the promise of a large donative; and, if it be true that they had been levied by Maximian in his African war, preferring the natural feelings of gratitude to the artificial ties of allegiance. Anulinus, the Prætorian prefect, declared himself in favour of Maxentius, and drew after him the most considerable part of the troops, accustomed to obey his commands. Rome, according to the expression of an orator, recalled her armies, and the unfortunate Severus, destitute of force and of counsel, retired, or rather fled, with precipitation to Ravenna. Here he might for some time have been safe. The fortifications of Ravenna were able to resist the attempts, and the morasses that surrounded the town were sufficient to prevent the approach, of the Italian army. The sea, which Severus commanded with a powerful fleet, secured him an inexhaustible supply of provisions, and gave a free entrance to the legions which, on the return of spring, would advance to his assistance from Illyricum and the East. Maximian, who conducted the siege in person, was soon convinced that he might waste his time and his army in the fruitless enterprise, and that he had nothing to hope either from force or famine. With an art more suitable to the character of Diocletian than to his own, he directed his attack, not so much against the walls of Ravenna as against the mind of Severus. The treachery which he had experienced disposed that unhappy prince to distrust the most sincere of his friends and adherents. The emissaries of Maximian easily persuaded his credulity that a conspiracy was formed to betray the town, and prevailed upon his fears not to expose himself to the discretion of an irritated conqueror, but to accept the faith of an honourable capitulation. He was at first received with humanity, and treated with respect. Maximian conducted the captive emperor to Rome, and gave him the most solemn assurances that he had secured his life by the resignation of the purple. But Severus could obtain only an easy death and an Imperial funeral. When the sentence was signified to him, the manner of executing it was left to his own choice; he preferred the favourite mode of the ancients, that of opening his veins: and, as soon as he expired, his body was carried to the sepulchre which had been constructed for the family of Gallienus.²⁸

Though the characters of Constantine and Maxentius had very little affinity with each other, their situation and interest were the same; and prudence seemed to require that they should unite their forces against the common enemy. Notwithstanding the

superiority of his age and dignity, the indefatigable Maximian passed the Alps, and, courting a personal interview with the sovereign of Gaul, carried with him his daughter Fausta as the pledge of the new alliance. The marriage was celebrated at Arles with every circumstance of magnificence; and the ancient colleague of Diocletian, who again asserted his claim to the Western empire, conferred on his son-in-law and ally the title of Augustus. By consenting to receive that honour from Maximian, Constantine seemed to embrace the cause of Rome and of the senate; but his professions were ambiguous, and his assistance slow and ineffectual. He considered with attention the approaching contest between the masters of Italy and the emperor of the East, and was prepared to consult his own safety or ambition in the event of the war.[29](#)

The importance of the occasion called for the presence and abilities of Galerius. At the head of a powerful army, collected from Illyricum and the East, he entered Italy, resolved to revenge the death of Severus, and to chastise the rebellious Romans; or, as he expressed his intentions, in the furious language of a barbarian, to extirpate the senate, and to destroy the people by the sword. But the skill of Maximian had concerted a prudent system of defence. The invader found every place hostile, fortified, and inaccessible; and, though he forced his way as far as Narni, within sixty miles of Rome, his dominion in Italy was confined to the narrow limits of his camp. Sensible to the increasing difficulties of his enterprise, the haughty Galerius made the first advances towards a reconciliation, and despatched two of his most considerable officers to tempt the Roman princes by the offer of a conference and the declaration of his paternal regard for Maxentius, who might obtain much more from his liberality than he could hope from the doubtful chance of war.[30](#) The offers of Galerius were rejected with firmness, his perfidious friendship refused with contempt, and it was not long before he discovered that, unless he provided for his safety by a timely retreat, he had some reason to apprehend the fate of Severus. The wealth, which the Romans defended against his rapacious tyranny, they freely contributed for his destruction. The name of Maximian, the popular arts of his son, the secret distribution of large sums, and the promise of still more liberal rewards, checked the ardour and corrupted the fidelity of the Illyrian legions; and, when Galerius at length gave the signal of the retreat, it was with some difficulty that he could prevail on his veterans not to desert a banner which had so often conducted them to victory and honour. A contemporary writer assigns two other causes for the failure of the expedition; but they are both of such a nature that a cautious historian will scarcely venture to adopt them. We are told that Galerius, who had formed a very imperfect notion of the greatness of Rome by the cities of the East with which he was acquainted, found his forces inadequate to the siege of that immense capital. But the extent of a city serves only to render it more accessible to the enemy; Rome had long since been accustomed to submit on the approach of a conqueror; nor could the temporary enthusiasm of the people have long contended against the discipline and valour of the legions. We are likewise informed that the legions themselves were struck with horror and remorse, and that those pious sons of the republic refused to violate the sanctity of their venerable parent.[31](#) But, when we recollect with how much ease in the more ancient civil wars, the zeal of party and the habits of military obedience had converted the native citizens of Rome into her most implacable enemies, we shall be inclined to distrust this extreme delicacy of strangers and barbarians, who had never beheld Italy till they entered it in

a hostile manner. Had they not been restrained by motives of a more interested nature, they would probably have answered Galerius in the words of Cæsar's veterans: "If our general wishes to lead us to the banks of the Tiber, we are prepared to trace out his camp. Whatsoever walls he has determined to level with the ground, our hands are ready to work the engines: nor shall we hesitate, should the name of the devoted city be Rome itself." These are indeed the expressions of a poet; but of a poet who has been distinguished, and even censured, for his strict adherence to the truth of history.[32](#)

The legions of Galerius exhibited a very melancholy proof of their disposition by the ravages which they committed in their retreat. They murdered, they ravished, they plundered, they drove away the flocks and herds of the Italians; they burnt the villages through which they passed, and they endeavoured to destroy the country, which it had not been in their power to subdue. During the whole march Maxentius hung on their rear; but he very prudently declined a general engagement with those brave and desperate veterans. His father had undertaken a second journey into Gaul, with the hope of persuading Constantine, who had assembled an army on the frontier, to join the pursuit and to complete the victory. But the actions of Constantine were guided by reason, and not by resentment. He persisted in the wise resolution of maintaining a balance of power in the divided empire, and he no longer hated Galerius when that aspiring prince had ceased to be an object of terror.[33](#)

The mind of Galerius was the most susceptible of the sterner passions, but it was not however incapable of a sincere and lasting friendship. Licinius,[34](#) whose manners as well as character were not unlike his own, seems to have engaged both his affection and esteem. Their intimacy had commenced in the happier period, perhaps, of their youth and obscurity. It had been cemented by the freedom and dangers of a military life; they had advanced, almost by equal steps, through the successive honours of the service; and, as soon as Galerius was invested with the Imperial dignity, he seems to have conceived the design of raising his companion to the same rank with himself. During the short period of his prosperity, he considered the rank of Cæsar as unworthy of the age and merit of Licinius, and rather chose to reserve for him the place of Constantius, and the empire of the West. While the emperor was employed in the Italian war, he entrusted his friend with the defence of the Danube; and immediately after his return from that unfortunate expedition he invested Licinius with the vacant purple of Severus, resigning to his immediate command the provinces of Illyricum.[35](#) The news of his promotion was no sooner carried into the East, than Maximin, who governed, or rather oppressed, the countries of Egypt and Syria, betrayed his envy and discontent, disdained the inferior name of Cæsar, and, notwithstanding the prayers as well as arguments of Galerius, exacted, almost by violence, the equal title of Augustus.[36](#) For the first, and indeed for the last, time, the Roman world was administered by six emperors. In the West, Constantine and Maxentius affected to reverence their father Maximian. In the East, Licinius and Maximin honoured with more real consideration their benefactor Galerius. The opposition of interest, and the memory of a recent war, divided the empire into two great hostile powers; but their mutual fears produced an apparent tranquillity, and even a feigned reconciliation, till the deaths of the elder princes, of Maximian, and

more particularly of Galerius, gave a new direction to the views and passions of their surviving associates.

When Maximian had reluctantly abdicated the empire, the venal orators of the times applauded his philosophic moderation. When his ambition excited, or at least encouraged, a civil war, they returned thanks to his generous patriotism, and gently censured that love of ease and retirement which had withdrawn him from the public service.³⁷ But it was impossible that minds like those of Maximian and his son could long possess in harmony an undivided power. Maxentius considered himself as the legal sovereign of Italy, elected by the Roman senate and people; nor would he endure the control of his father, who arrogantly declared that by *his* name and abilities the rash youth had been established on the throne. The cause was solemnly pleaded before the Prætorian guards, and those troops, who dreaded the severity of the old emperor, espoused the party of Maxentius.³⁸ The life and freedom of Maximian were however respected, and he retired from Italy into Illyricum, affecting to lament his past conduct, and secretly contriving new mischiefs. But Galerius, who was well acquainted with his character, soon obliged him to leave his dominions, and the last refuge of the disappointed Maximian was the court of his son-in-law Constantine.³⁹ He was received with respect by that artful prince, and with the appearance of filial tenderness by the empress Fausta. That he might remove every suspicion, he resigned the Imperial purple a second time,⁴⁰ professing himself at length convinced of the vanity of greatness and ambition. Had he persevered in this resolution, he might have ended his life with less dignity indeed than in his first retirement, yet, however, with comfort and reputation. But the near prospect of a throne brought back to his remembrance the state from whence he was fallen, and he resolved, by a desperate effort, either to reign or to perish. An incursion of the Franks had summoned Constantine, with a part of his army, to the banks of the Rhine; the remainder of the troops were stationed in the southern provinces of Gaul, which lay exposed to the enterprises of the Italian emperor, and a considerable treasure was deposited in the city of Arles. Maximian either craftily invented, or hastily credited, a vain report of the death of Constantine. Without hesitation he ascended the throne, seized the treasure, and, scattering it with his accustomed profusion among the soldiers, endeavoured to awake in their minds the memory of his ancient dignity and exploits. Before he could establish his authority, or finish the negotiation which he appears to have entered into with his son Maxentius, the celerity of Constantine defeated all his hopes. On the first news of his perfidy and ingratitude, that prince returned by rapid marches from the Rhine to the Saone, embarked on the last-mentioned river at Chalons, and, at Lyons trusting himself to the rapidity of the Rhone, arrived at the gates of Arles, with a military force which it was impossible for Maximian to resist, and which scarcely permitted him to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Marseilles. The narrow neck of land which joined that place to the continent was fortified against the besiegers, whilst the sea was open, either for the escape of Maximian, or for the succours of Maxentius, if the latter should choose to disguise his invasion of Gaul under the honourable pretence of defending a distressed, or, as he might allege, an injured father. Apprehensive of the fatal consequences of delay, Constantine gave orders for an immediate assault; but the scaling ladders were found too short for the height of the walls, and Marseilles might have sustained as long a siege as it formerly did against the arms of Cæsar, if the garrison, conscious either of

their fault or of their danger, had not purchased their pardon by delivering up the city and the person of Maximian. A secret but irrevocable sentence of death was pronounced against the usurper; he obtained only the same favour which he had indulged to Severus, and it was published to the world that, oppressed by the remorse of his repeated crimes, he strangled himself with his own hands. After he had lost the assistance, and disdained the moderate counsels, of Diocletian, the second period of his active life was a series of public calamities and personal mortifications, which were terminated, in about three years, by an ignominious death. He deserved his fate; but we should find more reason to applaud the humanity of Constantine, if he had spared an old man, the benefactor of his father, and the father of his wife. During the whole of this melancholy transaction, it appears that Fausta sacrificed the sentiments of nature to her conjugal duties.[41](#)

The last years of Galerius were less shameful and unfortunate; and, though he had filled with more glory the subordinate station of Cæsar than the superior rank of Augustus, he preserved, till the moment of his death, the first place among the princes of the Roman world. He survived his retreat from Italy about four years; and, wisely relinquishing his views of universal empire, he devoted the remainder of his life to the enjoyment of pleasure, and to the execution of some works of public utility; among which we may distinguish the discharging into the Danube the superfluous waters of the lake Pelso, and the cutting down the immense forests that encompassed it; an operation worthy of a monarch, since it gave an extensive country to the agriculture of his Pannonian subjects.[42](#) His death was occasioned by a very painful and lingering disorder. His body, swelled by an intemperate course of life to an unwieldy corpulence, was covered with ulcers, and devoured by innumerable swarms of those insects who have given their name to a most loathsome disease;[43](#) but, as Galerius had offended a very zealous and powerful party among his subjects, his sufferings, instead of exciting their compassion, have been celebrated as the visible effects of divine justice.[44](#) He had no sooner expired in his palace of Nicomedia,[45](#) than the two emperors who were indebted for their purple to his favour began to collect their forces, with the intention either of disputing, or of dividing, the dominions which he had left without a master. They were persuaded however to desist from the former design, and to agree in the latter. The provinces of Asia fell to the share of Maximin, and those of Europe augmented the portion of Licinius. The Hellespont and the Thracian Bosphorus formed their mutual boundary, and the banks of those narrow seas, which flowed in the midst of the Roman world, were covered with soldiers, with arms, and with fortifications. The deaths of Maximian and of Galerius reduced the number of emperors to four.[46](#) The sense of their true interest soon connected Licinius and Constantine; a secret alliance was concluded between Maximin and Maxentius, and their unhappy subjects expected with terror the bloody consequences of their inevitable dissensions, which were no longer restrained by the fear or the respect which they had entertained for Galerius.[47](#)

Among so many crimes and misfortunes occasioned by the passions of the Roman princes, there is some pleasure in discovering a single action which may be ascribed to their virtue. In the sixth year of his reign, Constantine visited the city of Autun, and generously remitted the arrears of tribute, reducing at the same time the proportion of their assessment from twenty-five to eighteen thousand heads, subject to the real and

personal capitation.⁴⁸ Yet even this indulgence affords the most unquestionable proof of the public misery. This tax was so extremely oppressive, either in itself or in the mode of collecting it, that, whilst the revenue was increased by extortion, it was diminished by despair: a considerable part of the territory of Autun was left uncultivated; and great numbers of the provincials rather chose to live as exiles and outlaws than to support the weight of civil society. It is but too probable that the bountiful emperor relieved, by a partial act of liberality, one among the many evils which he had caused by his general maxims of administration. But even those maxims were less the effect of choice than of necessity. And, if we except the death of Maximian, the reign of Constantine in Gaul seems to have been the most innocent and even virtuous period of his life. The provinces were protected by his presence from the inroads of the barbarians, who either dreaded or experienced his active valour. After a signal victory over the Franks and Alemanni, several of their princes were exposed by his order to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Treves, and the people seem to have enjoyed the spectacle, without discovering, in such a treatment of royal captives, anything that was repugnant to the laws of nations or of humanity.⁴⁹

The virtues of Constantine were rendered more illustrious by the vices of Maxentius. Whilst the Gallic provinces enjoyed as much happiness as the condition of the times was capable of receiving, Italy and Africa⁵⁰ groaned under the dominion of a tyrant as contemptible as he was odious. The zeal of flattery and faction has indeed too frequently sacrificed the reputation of the vanquished to the glory of their successful rivals; but even those writers who have revealed, with the most freedom and pleasure, the faults of Constantine, unanimously confess that Maxentius was cruel, rapacious, and profligate.⁵¹ He had the good fortune to suppress a slight rebellion in Africa. The governor and a few adherents had been guilty; the province suffered for their crime. The flourishing cities of Cirtha and Carthage, and the whole extent of that fertile country, were wasted by fire and sword. The abuse of victory was followed by the abuse of law and justice. A formidable army of sycophants and delators invaded Africa; the rich and the noble were easily convicted of a connection with the rebels; and those among them who experienced the emperor's clemency were only punished by the confiscation of their estates.⁵² So signal a victory was celebrated by a magnificent triumph, and Maxentius exposed to the eyes of the people the spoils and captives of a Roman province. The state of the capital was no less deserving of compassion than that of Africa. The wealth of Rome supplied an inexhaustible fund for his vain and prodigal expenses, and the ministers of his revenue were skilled in the arts of rapine. It was under his reign that the method of exacting a *free gift* from the senators was first invented; and, as the sum was insensibly increased, the pretences of levying it, a victory, a birth, a marriage, or an Imperial consulship, were proportionably multiplied.⁵³ Maxentius had imbibed the same implacable aversion to the senate, which had characterised most of the former tyrants of Rome; nor was it possible for his ungrateful temper to forgive the generous fidelity which had raised him to the throne and supported him against all his enemies. The lives of the senators were exposed to his jealous suspicions, the dishonour of their wives and daughters heightened the gratification of his sensual passions.⁵⁴ It may be presumed that an Imperial lover was seldom reduced to sigh in vain; but, whenever persuasion proved ineffectual, he had recourse to violence; and there remains *one* memorable example of a noble matron, who preserved her chastity by a voluntary death. The soldiers were

the only order of men whom he appeared to respect, or studied to please. He filled Rome and Italy with armed troops, connived at their tumults, suffered them with impunity to plunder, and even to massacre, the defenceless people;[55](#) and, indulging them in the same licentiousness which their emperor enjoyed, Maxentius often bestowed on his military favourites the splendid villa, or the beautiful wife, of a senator. A prince of such a character, alike incapable of governing either in peace or in war, might purchase the support, but he could never obtain the esteem, of the army. Yet his pride was equal to his other vices. Whilst he passed his indolent life, either within the walls of his palace, or in the neighbouring gardens of Sallust, he was repeatedly heard to declare, that *he alone* was emperor, and that the other princes were no more than his lieutenants, on whom he had devolved the defence of the frontier provinces, that he might enjoy without interruption the elegant luxury of the capital. Rome, which had so long regretted the absence, lamented, during the six years of his reign, the presence, of her sovereign.[56](#)

Though Constantine might view the conduct of Maxentius with abhorrence, and the situation of the Romans with compassion, we have no reason to presume that he would have taken up arms to punish the one or to relieve the other. But the tyrant of Italy rashly ventured to provoke a formidable enemy, whose ambition had been hitherto restrained by considerations of prudence, rather than by principles of justice.[57](#) After the death of Maximian, his titles, according to the established custom, had been erased, and his statues thrown down with ignominy. His son, who had persecuted and deserted him when alive, affected to display the most pious regard for his memory, and gave orders that a similar treatment should be immediately inflicted on all the statues that had been erected in Italy and Africa to the honour of Constantine. That wise prince, who sincerely wished to decline a war, with the difficulty and importance of which he was sufficiently acquainted, at first dissembled the insult, and sought for redress by the milder expedients of negotiation, till he was convinced that the hostile and ambitious designs of the Italian emperor made it necessary for him to arm in his own defence. Maxentius, who openly avowed his pretensions to the whole monarchy of the West, had already prepared a very considerable force to invade the Gallic provinces on the side of Rhætia, and, though he could not expect any assistance from Licinius, he was flattered with the hope that the legions of Illyricum, allured by his presents and promises, would desert the standard of that prince, and unanimously declare themselves his soldiers and subjects.[58](#) Constantine no longer hesitated. He had deliberated with caution, he acted with vigour. He gave a private audience to the ambassadors, who, in the name of the senate and people, conjured him to deliver Rome from a detested tyrant; and, without regarding the timid remonstrances of his council, he resolved to prevent the enemy, and to carry the war into the heart of Italy.[59](#)

The enterprise was as full of danger as of glory; and the unsuccessful event of two former invasions was sufficient to inspire the most serious apprehensions. The veteran troops, who revered the name of Maximian, had embraced in both those wars the party of his son, and were now restrained by a sense of honour, as well as of interest, from entertaining an idea of a second desertion. Maxentius, who considered the Prætorian guards as the firmest defence of his throne, had increased them to their ancient establishment; and they composed, including the rest of the Italians who were

enlisted into his service, a formidable body of fourscore thousand men. Forty thousand Moors and Carthaginians had been raised since the reduction of Africa. Even Sicily furnished its proportion of troops; and the army of Maxentius amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand foot and eighteen thousand horse. The wealth of Italy supplied the expenses of the war; and the adjacent provinces were exhausted to form immense magazines of corn and every other kind of provisions. The whole force of Constantine consisted of ninety thousand foot and eight thousand horse;⁶⁰ and, as the defence of the Rhine required an extraordinary attention during the absence of the emperor, it was not in his power to employ above half his troops in the Italian expedition, unless he sacrificed the public safety to his private quarrel.⁶¹ At the head of about forty thousand soldiers, he marched to encounter an enemy whose numbers were at least four times superior to his own.⁶² But the armies of Rome, placed at a secure distance from danger, were enervated by indulgence and luxury. Habituated to the baths and theatres of Rome, they took the field with reluctance, and were chiefly composed of veterans who had almost forgotten, or of new levies who had never acquired, the use of arms and the practice of war. The hardy legions of Gaul had long defended the frontiers of the empire against the barbarians of the North; and in the performance of that laborious service their valour was exercised and their discipline confirmed. There appeared the same difference between the leaders as between the armies. Caprice or flattery had tempted Maxentius with the hopes of conquest; but these aspiring hopes soon gave way to the habits of pleasure and the consciousness of his inexperience. The intrepid mind of Constantine had been trained from his earliest youth to war, to action, and to military command.

When Hannibal marched from Gaul into Italy, he was obliged, first to discover, and then to open, a way over mountains, and through savage nations, that had never yielded a passage to a regular army.⁶³ The Alps were then guarded by nature, they are now fortified by art. Citadels, constructed with no less skill than labour and expense, command every avenue into the plain, and on that side render Italy almost inaccessible to the enemies of the king of Sardinia.⁶⁴ But in the course of the intermediate period, the generals who have attempted the passage have seldom experienced any difficulty or resistance. In the age of Constantine, the peasants of the mountains were civilised and obedient subjects; the country was plentifully stocked with provisions, and the stupendous highways which the Romans had carried over the Alps opened several communications between Gaul and Italy.⁶⁵ Constantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mount Cenis,⁶⁶ and led his troops with such active diligence that he descended into the plain of Piedmont before the court of Maxentius had received any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine. The city of Susa, however, which is situated at the foot of Mount Cenis, was surrounded with walls, and provided with a garrison sufficiently numerous to check the progress of an invader; but the impatience of Constantine's troops disdained the tedious forms of a siege. The same day that they appeared before Susa, they applied fire to the gates and ladders to the walls; and, mounting to the assault amidst a shower of stones and arrows, they entered the place sword in hand, and cut in pieces the greatest part of the garrison. The flames were extinguished by the care of Constantine, and the remains of Susa preserved from total destruction. About forty miles from thence, a more severe contest awaited him. A numerous army of Italians was assembled, under the lieutenants of Maxentius, in the plains of Turin.

Its principal strength consisted in a species of heavy cavalry, which the Romans, since the decline of their discipline, had borrowed from the nations of the East. The horses, as well as the men, were clothed in complete armour, the joints of which were artfully adapted to the motions of their bodies. The aspect of this cavalry was formidable, their weight almost irresistible; and, as, on this occasion, their generals had drawn them up in a compact column or wedge, with a sharp point, and with spreading flanks, they flattered themselves that they should easily break and trample down the army of Constantine. They might, perhaps, have succeeded in their design, had not their experienced adversary embraced the same method of defence which in similar circumstances had been practised by Aurelian. The skilful evolutions of Constantine divided and baffled this massy column of cavalry. The troops of Maxentius fled in confusion towards Turin; and, as the gates of the city were shut against them, very few escaped the sword of the victorious pursuers. By this important service Turin deserved to experience the clemency and even favour of the conqueror. He made his entry into the Imperial palace of Milan, and almost all the cities of Italy between the Alps and the Po not only acknowledged the power, but embraced with zeal the party, of Constantine.[67](#)

From Milan to Rome, the Æmilian and Flaminian highways offered an easy march of about four hundred miles; but, though Constantine was impatient to encounter the tyrant, he prudently directed his operations against another army of Italians, who, by their strength and position, might either oppose his progress, or, in case of a misfortune, might intercept his retreat. Ruricius Pompeianus, a general distinguished by his valour and ability, had under his command the city of Verona, and all the troops that were stationed in the province of Venetia. As soon as he was informed that Constantine was advancing towards him, he detached a large body of cavalry, which was defeated in an engagement near Brescia, and pursued by the Gallic legions as far as the gates of Verona. The necessity, the importance, and the difficulties of the siege of Verona immediately presented themselves to the sagacious mind of Constantine.[68](#) The city was accessible only by a narrow peninsula towards the west, as the other three sides were surrounded by the Adige, a rapid river which covered the province of Venetia, from whence the besieged derived an inexhaustible supply of men and provisions. It was not without great difficulty, and after several fruitless attempts, that Constantine found means to pass the river, at some distance above the city, and in a place where the torrent was less violent. He then encompassed Verona with strong lines, pushed his attacks with prudent vigour, and repelled a desperate sally of Pompeianus. That intrepid general, when he had used every means of defence that the strength of the place or that of the garrison could afford, secretly escaped from Verona, anxious not for his own but for the public safety. With indefatigable diligence he soon collected an army sufficient either to meet Constantine in the field, or to attack him if he obstinately remained within his lines. The emperor, attentive to the motions, and informed of the approach, of so formidable an enemy, left a part of his legions to continue the operations of the siege, whilst, at the head of those troops on whose valour and fidelity he more particularly depended, he advanced in person to engage the general of Maxentius. The army of Gaul was drawn up in two lines, according to the usual practice of war; but their experienced leader, perceiving that the numbers of the Italians far exceeded his own, suddenly changed his disposition, and, reducing the second, extended the front of his first, line to a just proportion with

that of the enemy. Such evolutions, which only veteran troops can execute without confusion in a moment of danger, commonly prove decisive: but, as this engagement began towards the close of the day, and was contested with great obstinacy during the whole night, there was less room for the conduct of the generals than for the courage of the soldiers. The return of light displayed the victory of Constantine, and a field of carnage, covered with many thousands of the vanquished Italians. Their general, Pompeianus, was found among the slain; Verona immediately surrendered at discretion, and the garrison was made prisoners of war.⁶⁹ When the officers of the victorious army congratulated their master on this important success, they ventured to add some respectful complaints, of such a nature, however, as the most jealous monarchs will listen to without displeasure. They represented to Constantine that, not contented with performing all the duties of a commander, he had exposed his own person with an excess of valour which almost degenerated into rashness; and they conjured him for the future to pay more regard to the preservation of a life in which the safety of Rome and of the empire was involved.⁷⁰

While Constantine signalised his conduct and valour in the field, the sovereign of Italy appeared insensible of the calamities and danger of a civil war which raged in the heart of his dominions. Pleasure was still the only business of Maxentius. Concealing, or at least attempting to conceal, from the public knowledge the misfortunes of his arms,⁷¹ he indulged himself in vain confidence which deferred the remedies of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itself.⁷² The rapid progress of Constantine⁷³ was scarcely sufficient to awaken him from this fatal security; he flattered himself that his well-known liberality, and the majesty of the Roman name, which had already delivered him from two invasions, would dissipate with the same facility the rebellious army of Gaul. The officers of experience and ability who had served under the banners of Maximian were at length compelled to inform his effeminate son of the imminent danger to which he was reduced; and, with a freedom that at once surprised and convinced him, to urge the necessity of preventing his ruin by a vigorous exertion of his remaining power. The resources of Maxentius, both of men and money, were still considerable. The Prætorian guards felt how strongly their own interest and safety were connected with his cause; and a third army was soon collected, more numerous than those which had been lost in the battles of Turin and Verona. It was far from the intention of the emperor to lead his troops in person. A stranger to the exercises of war, he trembled at the apprehension of so dangerous a contest; and, as fear is commonly superstitious, he listened with melancholy attention to the rumours of omens and presages which seemed to menace his life and empire. Shame at length supplied the place of courage, and forced him to take the field. He was unable to sustain the contempt of the Roman people. The circus resounded with their indignant clamours, and they tumultuously besieged the gates of the palace, reproaching the pusillanimity of their indolent sovereign, and celebrating the heroic spirit of Constantine.⁷⁴ Before Maxentius left Rome, he consulted the Sibylline books. The guardians of these ancient oracles were as well versed in the arts of this world, as they were ignorant of the secrets of fate; and they returned him a very prudent answer, which might adapt itself to the event, and secure their reputation whatever should be the chance of arms.⁷⁵

The celerity of Constantine's march has been compared to the rapid conquest of Italy by the first of the Cæsars; nor is the flattering parallel repugnant to the truth of history, since no more than fifty-eight days elapsed between the surrender of Verona and the final decision of the war. Constantine had always apprehended that the tyrant would obey the dictates of fear, and perhaps of prudence; and that, instead of risking his last hopes in a general engagement, he would shut himself up within the walls of Rome. His ample magazines secured him against the danger of famine; and, as the situation of Constantine admitted not of delay, he might have been reduced to the sad necessity of destroying with fire and sword the Imperial city, the noblest reward of his victory, and the deliverance of which had been the motive, or rather indeed the pretence, of the civil war.⁷⁶ It was with equal surprise and pleasure that, on his arrival at a place called Saxa Rubra, about nine miles from Rome,⁷⁷ he discovered the army of Maxentius prepared to give him battle.⁷⁸ Their long front filled a very spacious plain, and their deep array reached to the banks of the Tiber, which covered their rear, and forbade their retreat. We are informed, and we may believe, that Constantine disposed his troops with consummate skill, and that he chose for himself the post of honour and danger. Distinguished by the splendour of his arms, he charged in person the cavalry of his rival; and his irresistible attack determined the fortune of the day. The cavalry of Maxentius was principally composed either of unwieldy cuirassiers or of light Moors and Numidians. They yielded to the vigour of the Gallic horse, which possessed more activity than the one, more firmness than the other. The defeat of the two wings left the infantry without any protection on its flanks, and the undisciplined Italians fled without reluctance from the standard of a tyrant whom they had always hated, and whom they no longer feared. The Prætorians, conscious that their offences were beyond the reach of mercy, were animated by revenge and despair. Notwithstanding their repeated efforts, those brave veterans were unable to recover the victory: they obtained, however, an honourable death; and it was observed that their bodies covered the same ground which had been occupied by their ranks.⁷⁹ The confusion then became general, and the dismayed troops of Maxentius, pursued by an implacable enemy, rushed by thousands into the deep and rapid stream of the Tiber. The emperor himself attempted to escape back into the city over the Milvian bridge, but the crowds which pressed together through that narrow passage forced him into the river, where he was immediately drowned by the weight of his armour.⁸⁰ His body, which had sunk very deep into the mud, was found with some difficulty the next day. The sight of his head, when it was exposed to the eyes of the people, convinced them of their deliverance, and admonished them to receive with acclamations of loyalty and gratitude the fortunate Constantine, who thus achieved by his valour and ability the most splendid enterprise of his life.⁸¹

In the use of victory, Constantine neither deserved the praise of clemency, nor incurred the censure of immoderate rigour.⁸² He inflicted the same treatment to which a defeat would have exposed his own person and family, put to death the two sons of the tyrant, and carefully extirpated his whole race. The most distinguished adherents of Maxentius must have expected to share his fate, as they had shared his prosperity and his crimes: but, when the Roman people loudly demanded a greater number of victims, the conqueror resisted, with firmness and humanity, those servile clamours which were dictated by flattery as well as by resentment. Informers were punished and discouraged; the innocent who had suffered under the late tyranny were

recalled from exile, and restored to their estates. A general act of oblivion quieted the minds and settled the property of the people, both in Italy and in Africa.⁸³ The first time that Constantine honoured the senate with his presence, he recapitulated his own services and exploits in a modest oration, assured that illustrious order of his sincere regard, and promised to re-establish its ancient dignity and privileges. The grateful senate repaid these unmeaning professions by the empty titles of honour, which it was yet in their power to bestow; and, without presuming to ratify the authority of Constantine, they passed a decree to assign him the first rank among the three *Augusti* who governed the Roman world.⁸⁴ Games and festivals were instituted to preserve the fame of his victory, and several edifices, raised at the expense of Maxentius, were dedicated to the honour of his successful rival. The triumphal arch of Constantine still remains a melancholy proof of the decline of the arts, and a singular testimony of the meanest vanity. As it was not possible to find in the capital of the empire a sculptor who was capable of adorning that public monument, the arch of Trajan, without any respect either for his memory or for the rules of propriety, was stripped of its most elegant figures. The difference of times and persons, of actions and characters, was totally disregarded. The Parthian captives appear prostrate at the feet of a prince who never carried his arms beyond the Euphrates; and curious antiquarians can still discover the head of Trajan on the trophies of Constantine. The new ornaments which it was necessary to introduce between the vacancies of ancient sculpture are executed in the rudest and most unskilful manner.⁸⁵

The final abolition of the Prætorian guards was a measure of prudence as well as of revenge. Those haughty troops, whose numbers and privileges had been restored, and even augmented, by Maxentius, were for ever suppressed by Constantine. Their fortified camp was destroyed, and the few Prætorians who had escaped the fury of the sword were dispersed among the legions, and banished to the frontiers of the empire, where they might be serviceable without again becoming dangerous.⁸⁶ By suppressing the troops which were usually stationed in Rome, Constantine gave the fatal blow to the dignity of the senate and people, and the disarmed capital was exposed without protection to the insults or neglect of its distant master. We may observe that, in this last effort to preserve their expiring freedom, the Romans, from the apprehension of a tribute, had raised Maxentius to the throne. He exacted that tribute from the senate, under the name of a free gift. They implored the assistance of Constantine. He vanquished the tyrant, and converted the free gift into a perpetual tax. The senators, according to the declaration which was required of their property, were divided into several classes. The most opulent paid annually eight pounds of gold,⁸⁷ the next class paid four, the last two, and those whose poverty might have claimed an exemption were assessed, however, at seven pieces of gold. Besides the regular members of the senate, their sons, their descendants, and even their relations, enjoyed the vain privileges, and supported the heavy burdens, of the senatorial order; nor will it any longer excite our surprise that Constantine should be attentive to increase the number of persons who were included under so useful a description.⁸⁸ After the defeat of Maxentius, the victorious emperor passed no more than two or three months in Rome, which he visited twice during the remainder of his life, to celebrate the solemn festivals of the tenth and of the twentieth years of his reign. Constantine was almost perpetually in motion, to exercise the legions, or to inspect the state of the provinces. Treves, Milan, Aquileia, Sirmium, Naissus, and Thessalonica were the

occasional places of his residence, till he founded a new Rome on the confines of Europe and Asia.[89](#)

Before Constantine marched into Italy, he had secured the friendship, or at least the neutrality, of Licinius, the Illyrian emperor. He had promised his sister Constantia in marriage to that prince; but the celebration of the nuptials was deferred till after the conclusion of the war; and the interview of the two emperors at Milan, which was appointed for that purpose, appeared to cement the union of their families and interests.[90](#) In the midst of the public festivity they were suddenly obliged to take leave of each other. An inroad of the Franks summoned Constantine to the Rhine, and the hostile approach of the sovereign of Asia demanded the immediate presence of Licinius. Maximin had been the secret ally of Maxentius, and, without being discouraged by his fate, he resolved to try the fortune of a civil war. He moved out of Syria towards the frontiers of Bithynia, in the depth of winter. The season was severe and tempestuous; great numbers of men as well as horses perished in the snow; and, as the roads were broken up by incessant rains, he was obliged to leave behind him a considerable part of the heavy baggage, which was unable to follow the rapidity of his forced marches. By this extraordinary effort of diligence, he arrived with a harassed but formidable army on the banks of the Thracian Bosphorus, before the lieutenants of Licinius were apprised of his hostile intentions. Byzantium surrendered to the power of Maximin, after a siege of eleven days. He was detained some days under the walls of Heraclea; and he had no sooner taken possession of that city than he was alarmed by the intelligence that Licinius had pitched his camp at the distance of only eighteen miles. After a fruitless negotiation, in which the two princes attempted to seduce the fidelity of each other's adherents, they had recourse to arms. The emperor of the East commanded a disciplined and veteran army of above seventy thousand men, and Licinius, who had collected about thirty thousand Illyrians, was at first oppressed by the superiority of numbers. His military skill and the firmness of his troops restored the day, and obtained a decisive victory. The incredible speed which Maximin exerted in his flight is much more celebrated than his prowess in the battle. Twenty-four hours afterwards he was seen pale, trembling, and without his Imperial ornaments, at Nicomedia, one hundred and sixty miles from the place of his defeat. The wealth of Asia was yet unexhausted; and, though the flower of his veterans had fallen in the late action, he had still power, if he could obtain time, to draw very numerous levies from Syria and Egypt. But he survived his misfortune only three or four months. His death, which happened at Tarsus, was variously ascribed to despair, to poison, and to the divine justice. As Maximin was alike destitute of abilities and of virtue, he was lamented neither by the people nor by the soldiers. The provinces of the East, delivered from the terrors of civil war, cheerfully acknowledged the authority of Licinius.[91](#)

The vanquished emperor left behind him two children, a boy of about eight, and a girl of about seven, years old. Their inoffensive age might have excited compassion; but the compassion of Licinius was a very feeble resource, nor did it restrain him from *extinguishing* the name and memory of his adversary. The death of Severianus will admit of less excuse, as it was dictated neither by revenge nor by policy. The conqueror had never received any injury from the father of that unhappy youth, and the short and obscure reign of Severus in a distant part of the empire was already

forgotten. But the execution of Candidianus was an act of the blackest cruelty and ingratitude. He was the natural son of Galerius, the friend and benefactor of Licinius. The prudent father had judged him too young to sustain the weight of a diadem; but he hoped that, under the protection of princes who were indebted to his favour for the Imperial purple, Candidianus might pass a secure and honourable life. He was now advancing towards the twentieth year of his age, and the royalty of his birth, though unsupported either by merit or ambition, was sufficient to exasperate the jealous mind of Licinius.⁹² To these innocent and illustrious victims of his tyranny, we must add the wife and daughter of the emperor Diocletian. When that prince conferred on Galerius the title of Cæsar, he had given him in marriage his daughter Valeria, whose melancholy adventures might furnish a very singular subject for tragedy. She had fulfilled, and even surpassed, the duties of a wife. As she had not any children herself, she condescended to adopt the illegitimate son of her husband, and invariably displayed towards the unhappy Candidianus the tenderness and anxiety of a real mother. After the death of Galerius, her ample possessions provoked the avarice, and her personal attractions excited the desires, of his successor Maximin.⁹³ He had a wife still alive; but divorce was permitted by the Roman law, and the fierce passions of the tyrant demanded an immediate gratification. The answer of Valeria was such as became the daughter and widow of emperors; but it was tempered by the prudence which her defenceless condition compelled her to observe. She represented to the persons whom Maximin had employed on this occasion “that, even if honour could permit a woman of her character and dignity to entertain a thought of second nuptials, decency at least must forbid her to listen to his addresses at a time when the ashes of her husband and his benefactor were still warm, and while the sorrows of her mind were still expressed by her mourning garments. She ventured to declare that she could place very little confidence in the professions of a man, whose cruel inconstancy was capable of repudiating a faithful and affectionate wife.”⁹⁴ On this repulse, the love of Maximin was converted into fury; and, as witnesses and judges were always at his disposal, it was easy for him to cover his fury with an appearance of legal proceedings, and to assault the reputation as well as the happiness of Valeria. Her estates were confiscated, her eunuchs and domestics devoted to the most inhuman tortures, and several innocent and respectable matrons, who were honoured with her friendship, suffered death on a false accusation of adultery. The empress herself, together with her mother Prisca, was condemned to exile; and, as they were ignominiously hurried from place to place before they were confined to a sequestered village in the deserts of Syria, they exposed their shame and distress to the provinces of the East, which, during thirty years, had respected their august dignity. Diocletian made several ineffectual efforts to alleviate the misfortunes of his daughter; and, as the last return that he expected for the Imperial purple, which he had conferred upon Maximin, he entreated that Valeria might be permitted to share his retirement of Salona, and to close the eyes of her afflicted father.⁹⁵ He entreated, but, as he could no longer threaten, his prayers were received with coldness and disdain; and the pride of Maximin was gratified in treating Diocletian as a suppliant, and his daughter as a criminal. The death of Maximin seemed to assure the empresses of a favourable alteration in their fortune. The public disorders relaxed the vigilance of their guard, and they easily found means to escape from the place of their exile, and to repair, though with some precaution, and in disguise, to the court of Licinius. His behaviour, in the first days of his reign, and the honourable reception which he gave to young

Candidianus, inspired Valeria with a secret satisfaction, both on her own account, and on that of her adopted son. But these grateful prospects were soon succeeded by horror and astonishment; and the bloody executions which stained the palace of Nicomedia sufficiently convinced her that the throne of Maximin was filled by a tyrant more inhuman than himself. Valeria consulted her safety by a hasty flight, and, still accompanied by her mother Prisca, they wandered above fifteen months⁹⁶ through the provinces, concealed in the disguise of plebeian habits. They were at length discovered at Thessalonica; and, as the sentence of their death was already pronounced, they were immediately beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea. The people gazed on the melancholy spectacle; but their grief and indignation were suppressed by the terrors of a military guard. Such was the unworthy fate of the wife and daughter of Diocletian. We lament their misfortunes, we cannot discover their crimes; and, whatever idea we may justly entertain of the cruelty of Licinius, it remains a matter of surprise that he was not contented with some more secret and decent method of revenge.⁹⁷

The Roman world was now divided between Constantine and Licinius, the former of whom was master of the West, and the latter of the East. It might perhaps have been expected that the conquerors, fatigued with civil war, and connected by a private as well as public alliance, would have renounced, or at least would have suspended, any farther designs of ambition. And yet a year had scarcely elapsed after the death of Maximin, before the victorious emperors turned their arms against each other. The genius, the success, and the aspiring temper of Constantine may seem to mark him out as the aggressor; but the perfidious character of Licinius justifies the most unfavourable suspicions, and by the faint light which history reflects on this transaction⁹⁸ we may discover a conspiracy fomented by his arts against the authority of his colleague. Constantine had lately given his sister Anastasia in marriage to Bassianus, a man of a considerable family and fortune, and had elevated his new kinsman to the rank of Cæsar. According to the system of government instituted by Diocletian, Italy, and perhaps Africa, were designed for his department in the empire. But the performance of the promised favour was either attended with so much delay, or accompanied with so many unequal conditions, that the fidelity of Bassianus was alienated rather than secured by the honourable distinction which he had obtained. His nomination had been ratified by the consent of Licinius, and that artful prince, by the means of his emissaries, soon contrived to enter into a secret and dangerous correspondence with the new Cæsar, to irritate his discontents, and to urge him to the rash enterprise of extorting by violence what he might in vain solicit from the justice of Constantine. But the vigilant emperor discovered the conspiracy before it was ripe for execution; and, after solemnly renouncing the alliance of Bassianus, despoiled him of the purple and inflicted the deserved punishment on his treason and ingratitude. The haughty refusal of Licinius, when he was required to deliver up the criminals who had taken refuge in his dominions, confirmed the suspicions already entertained of his perfidy; and the indignities offered at Æmona, on the frontiers of Italy, to the statues of Constantine, became the signal of discord between the two princes.⁹⁹

The first battle was fought near Cibalis, a city of Pannonia, situated on the river Save, about fifty miles above Sirmium.¹⁰⁰ From the inconsiderable forces which in this important contest two such powerful monarchs brought into the field, it may be

inferred that the one was suddenly provoked, and that the other was unexpectedly surprised. The emperor of the West had only twenty thousand, and the sovereign of the East no more than five and thirty thousand, men. The inferiority of number was, however, compensated by the advantage of the ground. Constantine had taken post in a defile about half a mile in breadth, between a steep hill and a deep morass; and in that situation he steadily expected and repulsed the first attack of the enemy. He pursued his success, and advanced into the plain. But the veteran legions of Illyricum rallied under the standard of a leader who had been trained to arms in the school of Probus and Diocletian. The missile weapons on both sides were soon exhausted; the two armies, with equal valour, rushed to a closer engagement of swords and spears, and the doubtful contest had already lasted from the dawn of day to a late hour of the evening when the right wing, which Constantine led in person, made a vigorous and decisive charge. The judicious retreat of Licinius saved the remainder of his troops from a total defeat; but, when he computed his loss, which amounted to more than twenty thousand men, he thought it unsafe to pass the night in the presence of an active and victorious enemy. Abandoning his camp and magazines, he marched away with secrecy and diligence at the head of the greatest part of his cavalry, and was soon removed beyond the danger of a pursuit. His diligence preserved his wife, his son, and his treasures, which he had deposited at Sirmium. Licinius passed through that city, and, breaking down the bridge on the Save, hastened to collect a new army in Dacia and Thrace. In his flight he bestowed the precarious title of Cæsar on Valens, his general of the Illyrian frontier.[101](#)

The plain of Mardia in Thrace was the theatre of a second battle no less obstinate and bloody than the former. The troops on both sides displayed the same valour and discipline; and the victory was once more decided by the superior abilities of Constantine, who directed a body of five thousand men to gain an advantageous height, from whence, during the heat of the action, they attacked the rear of the enemy, and made a very considerable slaughter. The troops of Licinius, however, presenting a double front, still maintained their ground, till the approach of night put an end to the combat, and secured their retreat towards the mountains of Macedonia.[102](#) The loss of two battles, and of his bravest veterans, reduced the fierce spirit of Licinius to sue for peace. His ambassador, Mistrrianus, was admitted to the audience of Constantine; he expatiated on the common topics of moderation and humanity, which are so familiar to the eloquence of the vanquished; represented, in the most insinuating language, that the event of the war was still doubtful, whilst its inevitable calamities were alike pernicious to both the contending parties; and declared that he was authorised to propose a lasting and honourable peace in the name of the *two* emperors his masters. Constantine received the mention of Valens with indignation and contempt. “It was not for such a purpose,” he sternly replied, “that we have advanced from the shores of the Western ocean in an uninterrupted course of combats and victories, that, after rejecting an ungrateful kinsman, we should accept for our colleague a contemptible slave. The abdication of Valens is the first article of the treaty.”[103](#) It was necessary to accept this humiliating condition, and the unhappy Valens, after a reign of a few days, was deprived of the purple and of his life. As soon as the obstacle was removed, the tranquillity of the Roman world was easily restored. The successive defeats of Licinius had ruined his forces, but they had displayed his courage and abilities. His situation was almost desperate, but the efforts of despair are

sometimes formidable; and the good sense of Constantine preferred a great and certain advantage to a third trial of the chance of arms. He consented to leave his rival, or, as he again styled Licinius, his friend and brother, in the possession of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt; but the provinces of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Macedonia, and Greece were yielded to the Western empire, and the dominions of Constantine now extended from the confines of Caledonia to the extremity of Peloponnesus. It was stipulated by the same treaty that three royal youths, the sons of the emperors, should be called to the hopes of the succession. Crispus and the younger Constantine were soon afterwards declared Cæsars in the West, while the younger Licinius was invested with the same dignity in the East. In this double proportion of honours, the conqueror asserted the superiority of his arms and power.[104](#)

The reconciliation of Constantine and Licinius, though it was embittered by resentment and jealousy, by the remembrance of recent injuries, and by the apprehension of future dangers, maintained, however, above eight years, the tranquillity of the Roman world. As a very regular series of the Imperial laws commences about this period, it would not be difficult to transcribe the civil regulations which employed the leisure of Constantine. But the most important of his institutions are intimately connected with the new system of policy and religion, which was not perfectly established till the last and peaceful years of his reign. There are many of his laws which, as far as they concern the rights and property of individuals, and the practice of the bar, are more properly referred to the private than to the public jurisprudence of the empire; and he published many edicts of so local and temporary a nature, that they would ill deserve the notice of a general history. Two laws, however, may be selected from the crowd; the one, for its importance, the other, for its singularity; the former for its remarkable benevolence, the latter for its excessive severity. 1. The horrid practice, so familiar to the ancients, of exposing or murdering their newborn infants, was become every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy. It was the effect of distress; and the distress was principally occasioned by the intolerable burden of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel prosecutions of the officers of the revenue against their insolvent debtors. The less opulent or less industrious part of mankind, instead of rejoicing in an increase of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the impending miseries of a life which they themselves were unable to support. The humanity of Constantine, moved, perhaps, by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair, engaged him to address an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing immediate and sufficient relief to be given to those parents who should produce, before the magistrates, the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate. But the promise was too liberal, and the provision too vague, to effect any general or permanent benefit.[105](#) The law, though it may merit some praise, served rather to display than to alleviate the public distress. It still remains an authentic monument to contradict and confound those venal orators, who were too well satisfied with their own situation to discover either vice or misery under the government of a generous sovereign.[106](#) 2. The laws of Constantine against rapes were dictated with very little indulgence for the most amiable weaknesses of human nature; since the description of that crime was applied not only to the brutal violence which compelled, but even to the gentle seduction which might persuade, an

unmarried woman, under the age of twenty-five, to leave the house of her parents. “The successful ravisher was punished with death; and, as if simple death was inadequate to the enormity of his guilt, he was either burnt alive or torn in pieces by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. The virgin’s declaration that she had been carried away with her own consent, instead of saving her lover, exposed her to share his fate. The duty of a public prosecution was entrusted to the parents of the guilty or unfortunate maid; and, if the sentiments of Nature prevailed on them to dissemble the injury, and to repair by a subsequent marriage the honour of their family, they were themselves punished by exile and confiscation. The slaves, whether male or female, who were convicted of having been accessory to the rape or seduction, were burnt alive, or put to death by the ingenious torture of pouring down their throats a quantity of melted lead. As the crime was of a public kind, the accusation was permitted even to strangers. The commencement of the action was not limited to any term of years, and the consequences of the sentence were extended to the innocent offspring of such an irregular union.”¹⁰⁷ But, whenever the offence inspires less horror than the punishment, the rigour of penal law is obliged to give way to the common feelings of mankind. The most odious parts of this edict were softened or repealed in the subsequent reigns;¹⁰⁸ and even Constantine himself very frequently alleviated, by partial acts of mercy, the stern temper of his general institutions. Such, indeed, was the singular humour of that emperor, who showed himself as indulgent, and even remiss, in the execution of his laws, as he was severe, and even cruel, in the enacting of them. It is scarcely possible to observe a more decisive symptom of weakness, either in the character of the prince, or in the constitution of the government.¹⁰⁹

The civil administration was sometimes interrupted by the military defence of the empire. Crispus, a youth of the most amiable character, who had received with the title of Cæsar the command of the Rhine, distinguished his conduct, as well as valour, in several victories over the Franks and Alemanni; and taught the barbarians of that frontier to dread the eldest son of Constantine, and the grandson of Constantius.¹¹⁰ The emperor himself had assumed the more difficult and important province of the Danube. The Goths, who in the time of Claudius and Aurelian had felt the weight of the Roman arms, respected the power of the empire, even in the midst of its intestine divisions. But the strength of that warlike nation was now restored by a peace of near fifty years; a new generation had arisen, who no longer remembered the misfortunes of ancient days: the Sarmatians of the lake Mæotis followed the Gothic standard, either as subjects or as allies, and their united force was poured upon the countries of Illyricum. Campona, Margus, and Bononia appear to have been the scenes of several memorable sieges and battles;¹¹¹ and, though Constantine encountered a very obstinate resistance, he prevailed at length in the contest, and the Goths were compelled to purchase an ignominious retreat by restoring the booty and prisoners which they had taken. Nor was this advantage sufficient to satisfy the indignation of the emperor. He resolved to chastise as well as to repulse the insolent barbarians who had dared to invade the territories of Rome. At the head of the legions he passed the Danube, after repairing the bridge which had been constructed by Trajan, penetrated into the strongest recesses of Dacia,¹¹² and, when he had inflicted a severe revenge, condescended to give peace to the suppliant Goths, on condition that, as often as they were required, they should supply his armies with a body of forty thousand soldiers.¹¹³ Exploits like these were no doubt honourable to Constantine and

beneficial to the state; but it may surely be questioned whether they can justify the exaggerated assertion of Eusebius, that all Scythia, as far as the extremity of the North, divided as it was into so many names and nations of the most various and savage manners, had been added by his victorious arms to the Roman empire. [114](#)

In this exalted state of glory it was impossible that Constantine should any longer endure a partner in the empire. Confiding in the superiority of his genius and military power, he determined, without any previous injury, to exert them for the destruction of Licinius, whose advanced age and unpopular vices seemed to offer a very easy conquest. [115](#) But the old emperor, awakened by the approaching danger, deceived the expectations of his friends as well as of his enemies. Calling forth that spirit and those abilities by which he had deserved the friendship of Galerius and the Imperial purple, he prepared himself for the contest, collected the forces of the East, and soon filled the plains of Hadrianople with his troops, and the straits of the Hellespont with his fleet. The army consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand foot, and fifteen thousand horse; and, as the cavalry was drawn, for the most part, from Phrygia and Cappadocia, we may conceive a more favourable opinion of the beauty of the horses than of the courage and dexterity of their riders. The fleet was composed of three hundred and fifty galleys of three ranks of oars. An hundred and thirty of these were furnished by Egypt, and the adjacent coast of Africa. An hundred and ten sailed from the ports of Phœnicia and the isle of Cyprus; and the maritime countries of Bithynia, Ionia, and Caria were likewise obliged to provide an hundred and ten galleys. The troops of Constantine were ordered to rendezvous at Thessalonica; they amounted to above an hundred and twenty thousand horse and foot. [116](#) Their emperor was satisfied with their martial appearance, and his army contained more soldiers, though fewer men, than that of his Eastern competitor. The legions of Constantine were levied in the warlike provinces of Europe; action had confirmed their discipline, victory had elevated their hopes, and there were among them a great number of veterans, who, after seventeen glorious campaigns under the same leader, prepared themselves to deserve an honourable dismissal by a last effort of their valour. [117](#) But the naval preparations of Constantine were in every respect much inferior to those of Licinius. The maritime cities of Greece sent their respective quotas of men and ships to the celebrated harbour of Piræus, and their united forces consisted of no more than two hundred small vessels: a very feeble armament, if it is compared with those formidable fleets which were equipped and maintained by the republic of Athens during the Peloponnesian war. [118](#) Since Italy was no longer the seat of government, the naval establishments of Misenum and Ravenna had been gradually neglected; and, as the shipping and mariners of the empire were supported by commerce rather than by war, it was natural that they should the most abound in the industrious provinces of Egypt and Asia. It is only surprising that the Eastern emperor, who possessed so great a superiority at sea, should have neglected the opportunity of carrying an offensive war into the centre of his rival's dominions.

Instead of embracing such an active resolution, which might have changed the whole face of the war, the prudent Licinius expected the approach of his rival in a camp near Hadrianople, which he had fortified with an anxious care that betrayed his apprehension of the event. Constantine directed his march from Thessalonica towards that part of Thrace, till he found himself stopped by the broad and rapid stream of the

Hebrus, and discovered the numerous army of Licinius, which filled the steep ascent of the hill, from the river to the city of Hadrianople. Many days were spent in doubtful and distant skirmishes; but at length the obstacles of the passage and of the attack were removed by the intrepid conduct of Constantine. In this place we might relate a wonderful exploit of Constantine, which, though it can scarce be paralleled either in poetry or romance, is celebrated, not by a venal orator devoted to his fortune, but by an historian, the partial enemy of his fame. We are assured that the valiant emperor threw himself into the river Hebrus, accompanied only by *twelve* horsemen, and that, by the effort or terror of his invincible arm, he broke, slaughtered, and put to flight a host of an hundred and fifty thousand men. The credulity of Zosimus prevailed so strongly over his passion that, among the events of the memorable battle of Hadrianople, he seems to have selected and embellished, not the most important, but the most marvellous. The valour and danger of Constantine are attested by a slight wound which he received in the thigh; but it may be discovered even from an imperfect narration, and, perhaps, a corrupted text, that the victory was obtained no less by the conduct of the general than by the courage of the hero; that a body of five thousand archers marched round to occupy a thick wood in the rear of the enemy, whose attention was diverted by the construction of a bridge; and that Licinius, perplexed by so many artful evolutions, was reluctantly drawn from his advantageous post to combat on equal ground in the plain. The contest was no longer equal. His confused multitude of new levies was easily vanquished by the experienced veterans of the West. Thirty-four thousand men are reported to have been slain. The fortified camp of Licinius was taken by assault the evening of the battle; the greater part of the fugitives, who had retired to the mountains, surrendered themselves the next day to the discretion of the conqueror; and his rival, who could no longer keep the field, confined himself within the walls of Byzantium.[119](#)

The siege of Byzantium, which was immediately undertaken by Constantine, was attended with great labour and uncertainty. In the late civil wars, the fortifications of that place, so justly considered as the key of Europe and Asia, had been repaired and strengthened; and, as long as Licinius remained master of the sea, the garrison was much less exposed to the danger of famine than the army of the besiegers. The naval commanders of Constantine were summoned to his camp, and received his positive orders to force the passage of the Hellespont, as the fleet of Licinius, instead of seeking and destroying their feeble enemy, continued inactive in those narrow straits where its superiority of numbers was of little use or advantage. Crispus, the emperor's eldest son, was entrusted with the execution of this daring enterprise, which he performed with so much courage and success, that he deserved the esteem, and most probably excited the jealousy, of his father. The engagement lasted two days, and, in the evening of the first, the contending fleets, after a considerable and mutual loss, retired into their respective harbours of Europe and Asia. The second day about noon a strong south wind[120](#) sprang up, which carried the vessels of Crispus against the enemy; and, as the casual advantage was improved by his skilful intrepidity, he soon obtained a complete victory. An hundred and thirty vessels were destroyed, five thousand men were slain and Amandus, the admiral of the Asiatic fleet, escaped with the utmost difficulty to the shores of Chalcedon. As soon as the Hellespont was open, a plentiful convoy of provisions flowed into the camp of Constantine, who had already advanced the operations of the siege. He constructed artificial mounds of

earth of an equal height with the ramparts of Byzantium. The lofty towers which were erected on that foundation galled the besieged with large stones and darts from the military engines, and the battering-rams had shaken the walls in several places. If Licinius persisted much longer in the defence, he exposed himself to be involved in the ruin of the place. Before he was surrounded, he prudently removed his person and treasures to Chalcedon in Asia; and, as he was always desirous of associating companions to the hopes and dangers of his fortune, he now bestowed the title of Cæsar on Martinianus, who exercised one of the most important offices of the empire. [121](#)

Such were still the resources, and such the abilities, of Licinius, that, after so many successive defeats, he collected in Bithynia a new army of fifty or sixty thousand men, while the activity of Constantine was employed in the siege of Byzantium. The vigilant emperor did not, however, neglect the last struggles of his antagonist. A considerable part of his victorious army was transported over the Bosphorus in small vessels, and the decisive engagement was fought soon after their landing on the heights of Chrysopolis, or, as it is now called, of Scutari. The troops of Licinius, though they were lately raised, ill armed, and worse disciplined, made head against their conquerors with fruitless but desperate valour, till a total defeat and the slaughter of five and twenty thousand men irretrievably determined the fate of their leader. [122](#) He retired to Nicomedia, rather with the view of gaining some time for negotiation than with the hope of any effectual defence. Constantia, his wife and the sister of Constantine, interceded with her brother in favour of her husband, and obtained from his policy, rather than from his compassion, a solemn promise, confirmed by an oath, that after the sacrifice of Martinianus, and the resignation of the purple, Licinius himself should be permitted to pass the remainder of his life in peace and affluence. The behaviour of Constantia, and her relation to the contending parties, naturally recalls the remembrance of that virtuous matron who was the sister of Augustus and the wife of Antony. But the temper of mankind was altered, and it was no longer esteemed infamous for a Roman to survive his honour and independence. Licinius solicited and accepted the pardon of his offences, laid himself and his purple at the feet of his *lord* and *master*, was raised from the ground with insulting pity, was admitted the same day to the Imperial banquet, and soon afterwards was sent away to Thessalonica, which had been chosen for the place of his confinement. [123](#) His confinement was soon terminated by death, and it is doubtful whether a tumult of the soldiers, or a decree of the senate, was suggested as the motive for his execution. According to the rules of tyranny, he was accused of forming a conspiracy, and of holding a treasonable correspondence with the barbarians; but, as he was never convicted, either by his own conduct or by any legal evidence, we may perhaps be allowed, from his weakness, to presume his innocence. [124](#) The memory of Licinius was branded with infamy, his statues were thrown down, and by a hasty edict, of such mischievous tendency that it was almost immediately corrected, all his laws, and all the judicial proceedings of his reign, were at once abolished. [125](#) By this victory of Constantine, the Roman world was again united under the authority of one emperor, thirty-seven years after Diocletian had divided his power and provinces with his associate Maximian.

The successive steps of the elevation of Constantine, from his first assuming the purple at York to the resignation of Licinius at Nicomedia, have been related with some minuteness and precision, not only as the events are in themselves both interesting and important, but still more as they contributed to the decline of the empire by the expense of blood and treasure, and by the perpetual increase, as well of the taxes as of the military establishment. The foundation of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Christian religion, were the immediate and memorable consequences of this revolution.

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CHAPTER XV

The Progress of the Christian Religion, and the Sentiments, Manners, Numbers, and Condition of the primitive Christians

A candid but rational inquiry into the progress and establishment of Christianity may be considered as a very essential part of the history of the Roman empire. While that great body was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the Capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the period or to the limits of the Roman empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in arts and learning as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans it has been widely diffused to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients.

But this inquiry, however useful or entertaining, is attended with two peculiar difficulties. The scanty and suspicious materials of ecclesiastical history seldom enable us to dispel the dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the church. The great law of impartiality too often obliges us to reveal the imperfections of the uninspired teachers and believers of the gospel; and, to a careless observer, *their* faults may seem to cast a shade on the faith which they professed. But the scandal of the pious Christian, and the fallacious triumph of the Infidel, should cease as soon as they recollect not only *by whom*, but likewise *to whom*, the Divine Revelation was given. The theologian may indulge the pleasing task of describing Religion as she descended from Heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is imposed on the historian. He must discover the inevitable mixture of error and corruption which she contracted in a long residence upon earth, among a weak and degenerate race of beings.

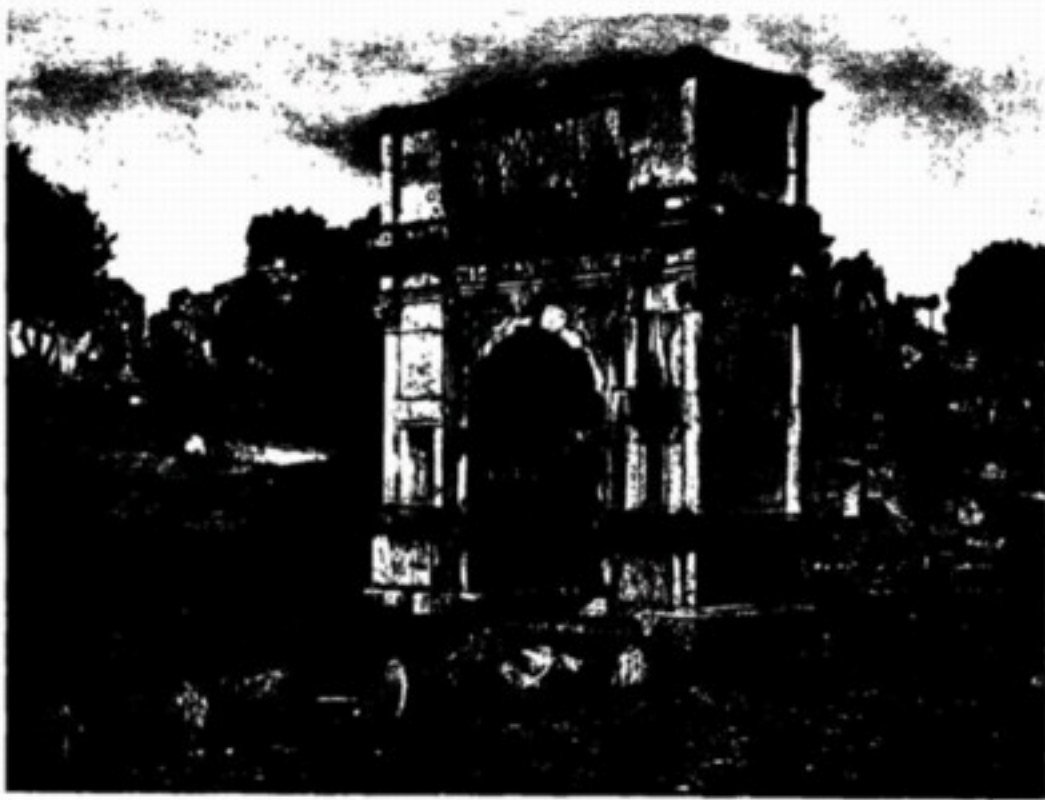
Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry, an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But, as truth and reason seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose; we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian church. It will, perhaps, appear that it was most effectually favoured and assisted by the five following causes: I. The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. II. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and

efficacy to that important truth. III. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. IV. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. V. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.

I. We have already described the religious harmony of the ancient world, and the facility with which the most different and even hostile nations embraced, or at least respected, each other's superstitions. A single people refused to join in the common intercourse of mankind. The Jews, who, under the Assyrian and Persian monarchies, had languished for many ages the most despised portion of their slaves,¹ emerged from obscurity under the successors of Alexander; and, as they multiplied to a surprising degree in the East, and afterwards in the West, they soon excited the curiosity and wonder of other nations.² The sullen obstinacy with which they maintained their peculiar rites and unsocial manners seemed to mark them out a distinct species of men, who boldly professed, or who faintly disguised, their implacable hatred to the rest of human kind.³ Neither the violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the example of the circumjacent nations, could ever persuade the Jews to associate with the institutions of Moses the elegant mythology of the Greeks.⁴ According to the maxims of universal toleration, the Romans protected a superstition which they despised.⁵ The polite Augustus condescended to give orders that sacrifices should be offered for his prosperity in the temple of Jerusalem;⁶ while the meanest of the posterity of Abraham, who should have paid the same homage to the Jupiter of the Capitol, would have been an object of abhorrence to himself and to his brethren. But the moderation of the conquerors was insufficient to appease the jealous prejudices of their subjects, who were alarmed and scandalised at the ensigns of paganism, which necessarily introduced themselves into a Roman province.⁷ The mad attempt of Caligula to place his own statue in the temple of Jerusalem was defeated by the unanimous resolution of a people who dreaded death much less than such an idolatrous profanation.⁸ Their attachment to the law of Moses was equal to their detestation of foreign religions. The current of zeal and devotion, as it was contracted into a narrow channel, ran with the strength, and sometimes with the fury, of a torrent.

This inflexible perseverance, which appeared so odious, or so ridiculous, to the ancient world, assumes a more awful character, since Providence has deigned to reveal to us the mysterious history of the chosen people. But the devout, and even scrupulous, attachment to the Mosaic religion, so conspicuous among the Jews who lived under the second temple, becomes still more surprising, if it is compared with the stubborn incredulity of their forefathers. When the law was given in thunder from Mount Sinai; when the tides of the ocean and the course of the planets were suspended for the convenience of the Israelites; and when temporal rewards and punishments were the immediate consequences of their piety or disobedience; they perpetually relapsed into rebellion against the visible majesty of their Divine King, placed the idols of the nations in the sanctuary of Jehovah, and imitated every fantastic ceremony that was practised in the tents of the Arabs or in the cities of Phœnicia.⁹ As the protection of Heaven was deservedly withdrawn from the ungrateful race, their faith acquired a proportionable degree of vigour and purity. The contemporaries of Moses and Joshua had beheld, with careless indifference, the most

amazing miracles. Under the pressure of every calamity, the belief of those miracles has preserved the Jews of a later period from the universal contagion of idolatry; and, in contradiction to every known principle of the human mind, that singular people seems to have yielded a stronger and more ready assent to the traditions of their remote ancestors than to the evidence of their own senses.[10](#)



The Jewish religion was admirably fitted for defence, but it was never designed for conquest; and it seems probable that the number of proselytes was never much superior to that of apostates. The divine promises were originally made, and the distinguishing rite of circumcision was enjoined, to a single family. When the posterity of Abraham had multiplied like the sands of the sea, the Deity, from whose mouth they received a system of laws and ceremonies, declared himself the proper and, as it were, the national God of Israel; and, with the most jealous care, separated his favourite people from the rest of mankind. The conquest of the land of Canaan was accompanied with so many wonderful and with so many bloody circumstances that the victorious Jews were left in a state of irreconcilable hostility with all their neighbours. They had been commanded to extirpate some of the most idolatrous tribes; and the execution of the Divine will had seldom been retarded by the weakness of humanity. With the other nations they were forbidden to contract any marriages or alliances; and the prohibition of receiving them into the congregation, which, in some cases, was perpetual, almost always extended to the third, to the seventh, or even to the tenth generation. The obligation of preaching to the Gentiles the faith of Moses had never been inculcated as a precept of the law, nor were the Jews inclined to impose it on themselves as a voluntary duty. In the admission of new citizens, that unsocial people was actuated by the selfish vanity of the Greeks, rather than by the generous policy of Rome. The descendants of Abraham were flattered by the opinion

that they alone were the heirs of the covenant; and they were apprehensive of diminishing the value of their inheritance, by sharing it too easily with the strangers of the earth. A larger acquaintance with mankind extended their knowledge without correcting their prejudices; and, whenever the God of Israel acquired any new votaries, he was much more indebted to the inconstant humour of polytheism than to the active zeal of his own missionaries.¹¹ The religion of Moses seems to be instituted for a particular country, as well as for a single nation; and, if a strict obedience had been paid to the order that every male, three times in the year, should present himself before the Lord Jehovah, it would have been impossible that the Jews could ever have spread themselves beyond the narrow limits of the promised land.¹² That obstacle was indeed removed by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem; but the most considerable part of the Jewish religion was involved in its destruction; and the Pagans, who had long wondered at the strange report of an empty sanctuary,¹³ were at a loss to discover what could be the object, or what could be the instruments, of a worship which was destitute of temples and of altars, of priests and of sacrifices. Yet even in their fallen state, the Jews, still asserting their lofty and exclusive privileges, shunned, instead of courting, the society of strangers. They still insisted with inflexible rigour on those parts of the law which it was in their power to practise. Their peculiar distinctions of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdensome observances, were so many objects of disgust and aversion for the other nations, to whose habits and prejudices they were diametrically opposite. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumcision was alone capable of repelling a willing proselyte from the door of the synagogue.¹⁴

Under these circumstances, Christianity offered itself to the world, armed with the strength of the Mosaic law, and delivered from the weight of its fetters. An exclusive zeal for the truth of religion and the unity of God was as carefully inculcated in the new as in the ancient system; and whatever was now revealed to mankind, concerning the nature and designs of the Supreme Being, was fitted to increase their reverence for that mysterious doctrine. The divine authority of Moses and the prophets was admitted, and even established, as the firmest basis of Christianity. From the beginning of the world, an uninterrupted series of predictions had announced and prepared the long-expected coming of the Messiah, who, in compliance with the gross apprehensions of the Jews, had been more frequently represented under the character of a King and Conqueror, than under that of a Prophet, a Martyr, and the Son of God. By his expiatory sacrifice, the imperfect sacrifices of the temple were at once consummated and abolished. The ceremonial law, which consisted only of types and figures, was succeeded by a pure and spiritual worship, equally adapted to all climates, as well as to every condition of mankind; and to the initiation of blood was substituted a more harmless initiation of water. The promise of divine favour, instead of being partially confined to the posterity of Abraham, was universally proposed to the freeman and the slave, to the Greek and to the barbarian, to the Jew and to the Gentile. Every privilege that could raise the proselyte from earth to Heaven, that could exalt his devotion, secure his happiness, or even gratify that secret pride which, under the semblance of devotion, insinuates itself into the human heart, was still reserved for the members of the Christian church; but at the same time all mankind was permitted, and even solicited, to accept the glorious distinction, which was not only proffered as a favour, but imposed as an obligation. It became the most sacred

duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessing which he had received, and to warn them against a refusal that would be severely punished as a criminal disobedience to the will of a benevolent but all-powerful deity.

The enfranchisement of the church from the bonds of the synagogue was a work however of some time and of some difficulty. The Jewish converts, who acknowledged Jesus in the character of the Messiah foretold by their ancient oracles, respected him as a prophetic teacher of virtue and religion; but they obstinately adhered to the ceremonies of their ancestors, and were desirous of imposing them on the Gentiles, who continually augmented the number of believers. These Judaizing Christians seem to have argued with some degree of plausibility from the divine origin of the Mosaic law, and from the immutable perfections of its great Author. They affirmed *that*, if the Being, who is the same through all eternity, had designed to abolish those sacred rites which had served to distinguish his chosen people, the repeal of them would have been no less clear and solemn than their first promulgation: *that*, instead of those frequent declarations, which either suppose or assert the perpetuity of the Mosaic religion, it would have been represented as a provisional scheme intended to last only till the coming of the Messiah, who should instruct mankind in a more perfect mode of faith and of worship: [15](#) *that* the Messiah himself, and his disciples who conversed with him on earth, instead of authorising by their example the most minute observances of the Mosaic law, [16](#) would have published to the world the abolition of those useless and obsolete ceremonies, without suffering Christianity to remain during so many years obscurely confounded among the sects of the Jewish church. Arguments like these appear to have been used in the defence of the expiring cause of the Mosaic law; but the industry of our learned divines has abundantly explained the ambiguous language of the Old Testament, and the ambiguous conduct of the apostolic teachers. It was proper gradually to unfold the system of the Gospel, and to pronounce, with the utmost caution and tenderness, a sentence of condemnation so repugnant to the inclination and prejudices of the believing Jews.

The history of the church of Jerusalem affords a lively proof of the necessity of those precautions, and of the deep impression which the Jewish religion had made on the minds of its sectaries. The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all circumcised Jews; and the congregation over which they presided, united the law of Moses with the doctrine of Christ. [17](#) It was natural that the primitive tradition of a church which was founded only forty years after the death of Christ, and was governed almost as many years under the immediate inspection of his apostle, should be received as the standard of orthodoxy. [18](#) The distant churches very frequently appealed to the authority of their venerable Parent, and relieved her distresses by a liberal contribution of alms. But, when numerous and opulent societies were established in the great cities of the empire, in Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome, the reverence which Jerusalem had inspired to all the Christian colonies insensibly diminished. The Jewish converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes, who had laid the foundations of the church, soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes that from all the various religions of polytheism enlisted under the banner of Christ; and the Gentiles, who with the approbation of their

peculiar apostle had rejected the intolerable weight of Mosaic ceremonies, at length refused to their more scrupulous brethren the same toleration which at first they had humbly solicited for their own practice. The ruin of the temple, of the city, and of the public religion of the Jews was severely felt by the Nazarenes; as in their manners, though not in their faith, they maintained so intimate a connection with their impious countrymen, whose misfortunes were attributed by the Pagans to the contempt, and more justly ascribed by the Christians to the wrath, of the Supreme Deity. The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languished above sixty years in solitude and obscurity.¹⁹ They still enjoyed the comfort of making frequent and devout visits to the *Holy City*, and the hope of being one day restored to those seats which both nature and religion taught them to love as well as to revere. But at length, under the reign of Hadrian, the desperate fanaticism of the Jews filled up the measure of their calamities; and the Romans, exasperated by their repeated rebellions, exercised the rights of victory with unusual rigour. The emperor founded, under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, a new city on Mount Sion,²⁰ to which he gave the privileges of a colony; and, denouncing the severest penalties against any of the Jewish people who should dare to approach its precincts, he fixed a vigilant garrison of a Roman cohort to enforce the execution of his orders. The Nazarenes had only one way left to escape the common proscription, and the force of truth was, on this occasion, assisted by the influence of temporal advantages. They elected Marcus for their bishop, a prelate of the race of the Gentiles, and most probably a native either of Italy or of some of the Latin provinces. At his persuasion, the most considerable part of the congregation renounced the Mosaic law, in the practice of which they had persevered above a century. By this sacrifice of their habits and prejudices they purchased a free admission into the colony of Hadrian, and more firmly cemented their union with the Catholic church.²¹

When the name and honours of the church of Jerusalem had been restored to Mount Sion, the crimes of heresy and schism were imputed to the obscure remnant of the Nazarenes which refused to accompany their Latin bishop. They still preserved their former habitation of Pella, spread themselves into the villages adjacent to Damascus, and formed an inconsiderable church in the city of Berœa, or, as it is now called, of Aleppo, in Syria.²² The name of Nazarenes was deemed too honourable for those Christian Jews, and they soon received from the supposed poverty of their understanding, as well as of their condition, the contemptuous epithet of Ebionites.²³ In a few years after the return of the church of Jerusalem, it became a matter of doubt and controversy whether a man who sincerely acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, but who still continued to observe the law of Moses, could possibly hope for salvation. The humane temper of Justin Martyr inclined him to answer this question in the affirmative; and, though he expressed himself with the most guarded diffidence, he ventured to determine in favour of such an imperfect Christian, if he were content to practise the Mosaic ceremonies, without pretending to assert their general use or necessity. But, when Justin was pressed to declare the sentiment of the church, he confessed that there were very many among the orthodox Christians, who not only excluded their Judaising brethren from the hope of salvation, but who declined any intercourse with them in the common offices of friendship, hospitality, and social life.²⁴ The more rigorous opinion prevailed, as it was natural to expect, over the

milder; and an external bar of separation was fixed between the disciples of Moses and those of Christ. The unfortunate Ebionites, rejected from one religion as apostates, and from the other as heretics, found themselves compelled to assume a more decided character; and, although some traces of that obsolete sect may be discovered as late as the fourth century, they insensibly melted away either into the church or the synagogue.[25](#)

While the orthodox church preserved a just medium between excessive veneration and improper contempt for the law of Moses, the various heretics deviated into equal but opposite extremes of error and extravagance. From the acknowledged truth of the Jewish religion the Ebionites had concluded that it could never be abolished. From its supposed imperfections the Gnostics as hastily inferred that it never was instituted by the wisdom of the Deity. There are some objections against the authority of Moses and the prophets, which too readily present themselves to the sceptical mind; though they can only be derived from our ignorance of remote antiquity, and from our incapacity to form an adequate judgment of the divine œconomy. These objections were eagerly embraced, and as petulantly urged, by the vain science of the Gnostics.[26](#) As those heretics were, for the most part, averse to the pleasures of sense, they morosely arraigned the polygamy of the patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the seraglio of Solomon. The conquest of the land of Canaan, and the extirpation of the unsuspecting natives, they were at a loss how to reconcile with the common notions of humanity and justice. But, when they recollected the sanguinary list of murders, of executions, and of massacres, which stain almost every page of the Jewish annals, they acknowledged that the barbarians of Palestine had exercised as much compassion towards their idolatrous enemies as they had ever shewn to their friends or countrymen.[27](#) Passing from the sectaries of the law to the law itself, they asserted that it was impossible that a religion which consisted only of bloody sacrifices and trifling ceremonies, and whose rewards as well as punishments were all of a carnal and temporal nature, could inspire the love of virtue, or restrain the impetuosity of passion. The Mosaic account of the creation and fall of man was treated with profane derision by the Gnostics, who would not listen with patience to the repose of the Deity after six days' labour, to the rib of Adam, the garden of Eden, the trees of life and of knowledge, the speaking serpent, the forbidden fruit, and the condemnation pronounced against human kind for the venial offence of their first progenitors.[28](#) The God of Israel was impiously represented by the Gnostics as a being liable to passion and to error, capricious in his favour, implacable in his resentment, meanly jealous of his superstitious worship, and confining his partial providence to a single people and to this transitory life. In such a character they could discover none of the features of the wise and omnipotent father of the universe.[29](#) They allowed that the religion of the Jews was somewhat less criminal than the idolatry of the Gentiles; but it was their fundamental doctrine that the Christ whom they adored as the first and brightest emanation of the Deity appeared upon earth to rescue mankind from their various errors, and to reveal a *new* system of truth and perfection. The most learned of the fathers, by a very singular condescension, have imprudently admitted the sophistry of the Gnostics. Acknowledging that the literal sense is repugnant to every principle of faith as well as reason, they deem themselves secure and invulnerable behind the ample veil of allegory, which they carefully spread over every tender part of the Mosaic dispensation.[30](#)

It has been remarked, with more ingenuity than truth, that the virgin purity of the church was never violated by schism or heresy before the reign of Trajan or Hadrian, about one hundred years after the death of Christ.³¹ We may observe, with much more propriety, that, during that period, the disciples of the Messiah were indulged in a freer latitude both of faith and practice than has ever been allowed in succeeding ages. As the terms of communion were insensibly narrowed, and the spiritual authority of the prevailing party was exercised with increasing severity, many of its most respectable adherents, who were called upon to renounce, were provoked to assert, their private opinions, to pursue the consequences of their mistaken principles, and openly to erect the standard of rebellion against the unity of the church. The Gnostics were distinguished as the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy of the Christian name, and that general appellation which expressed a superiority of knowledge was either assumed by their own pride or ironically bestowed by the envy of their adversaries.³² They were almost without exception of the race of the Gentiles, and their principal founders seem to have been natives of Syria or Egypt, where the warmth of the climate disposes both the mind and the body to indolent and contemplative devotion. The Gnostics blended with the faith of Christ many sublime but obscure tenets which they derived from oriental philosophy, and even from the religion of Zoroaster, concerning the eternity of matter, the existence of two principles, and the mysterious hierarchy of the invisible world.³³ As soon as they launched out into that vast abyss, they delivered themselves to the guidance of a disordered imagination; and, as the paths of error are various and infinite, the Gnostics were imperceptibly divided into more than fifty particular sects,³⁴ of whom the most celebrated appear to have been the Basilidians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and, in a still later period, the Manichæans. Each of these sects could boast of its bishops and congregations, of its doctors and martyrs,³⁵ and, instead of the four gospels adopted by the church, the heretics produced a multitude of histories, in which the actions and discourses of Christ and of his apostles were adapted to their respective tenets.³⁶ The success of the Gnostics was rapid and extensive.³⁷ They covered Asia and Egypt, established themselves in Rome, and sometimes penetrated into the provinces of the West. For the most part they arose in the second century, flourished during the third, and were suppressed in the fourth or fifth, by the prevalence of more fashionable controversies, and by the superior ascendant of the reigning power. Though they constantly disturbed the peace, and frequently disgraced the name, of religion, they contributed to assist rather than to retard the progress of Christianity. The Gentile converts, whose strongest objections and prejudices were directed against the law of Moses, could find admission into many Christian societies, which required not from their untutored mind any belief of an antecedent revelation. Their faith was insensibly fortified and enlarged, and the church was ultimately benefited by the conquests of its most inveterate enemies.³⁸

But, whatever difference of opinion might subsist between the Orthodox, the Ebionites, and the Gnostics, concerning the divinity or the obligation of the Mosaic law, they were all equally animated by the same exclusive zeal and by the same abhorrence for idolatry which had distinguished the Jews from the other nations of the ancient world. The philosopher, who considered the system of polytheism as a composition of human fraud and error, could disguise a smile of contempt under the mask of devotion, without apprehending that either the mockery or the compliance

would expose him to the resentment of any invisible, or, as he conceived them, imaginary powers. But the established religions of Paganism were seen by the primitive Christians in a much more odious and formidable light. It was the universal sentiment both of the church and of heretics that the dæmons were the authors, the patrons, and the objects of idolatry.³⁹ Those rebellious spirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels, and cast down into the infernal pit, were still permitted to roam upon earth, to torment the bodies, and to seduce the minds, of sinful men. The dæmons soon discovered and abused the natural propensity of the human heart towards devotion, and, artfully withdrawing the adoration of mankind from their Creator, they usurped the place and honours of the Supreme Deity. By the success of their malicious contrivances, they at once gratified their own vanity and revenge, and obtained the only comfort of which they were yet susceptible, the hope of involving the human species in the participation of their guilt and misery. It was confessed, or at least it was imagined, that they had distributed among themselves the most important characters of polytheism, one dæmon assuming the name and attributes of Jupiter, another of Æsculapius, a third of Venus, and a fourth perhaps of Apollo;⁴⁰ and that, by the advantage of their long experience and ærial nature, they were enabled to execute, with sufficient skill and dignity, the parts which they had undertaken. They lurked in the temples, instituted festivals and sacrifices, invented fables, pronounced oracles, and were frequently allowed to perform miracles. The Christians, who, by the interposition of evil spirits, could so readily explain every præternatural appearance, were disposed and even desirous to admit the most extravagant fictions of the Pagan mythology. But the belief of the Christian was accompanied with horror. The most trifling mark of respect to the national worship he considered as a direct homage yielded to the dæmon, and as an act of rebellion against the majesty of God.

In consequence of this opinion, it was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure and undefiled by the practice of idolatry. The religion of the nations was not merely a speculative doctrine professed in the schools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind and all the offices and amusements of society.⁴¹ The important transactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by solemn sacrifices, in which the magistrate, the senator, and the soldier were obliged to preside or to participate.⁴² The public spectacles were an essential part of the cheerful devotion of the Pagans, and the gods were supposed to accept, as the most grateful offering, the games that the prince and people celebrated in honour of their peculiar festivals.⁴³ The Christian, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness.⁴⁴ When the bride, struggling with well-affected reluctance, was forced in hymenæal pomp over the threshold of her new habitation,⁴⁵ or when the sad procession of the dead slowly moved towards the funeral pile;⁴⁶ the Christian, on these interesting occasions, was compelled to desert the persons who were the dearest to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent to those impious ceremonies. Every art and every trade that was in the least concerned in the framing or adorning of idols was polluted by the stain of

idolatry;⁴⁷ a severe sentence, since it devoted to eternal misery the far greater part of the community, which is employed in the exercise of liberal or mechanic professions. If we cast our eyes over the numerous remains of antiquity, we shall perceive that, besides the immediate representations of the Gods and the holy instruments of their worship, the elegant forms and agreeable fictions, consecrated by the imagination of the Greeks, were introduced as the richest ornaments of the houses, the dress, and the furniture, of the Pagans.⁴⁸ Even the arts of music and painting, of eloquence and poetry, flowed from the same impure origin. In the style of the fathers, Apollo and the Muses were the organs of the infernal spirit, Homer and Virgil were the most eminent of his servants, and the beautiful mythology which pervades and animates the compositions of their genius is destined to celebrate the glory of the dæmons. Even the common language of Greece and Rome abounded with familiar but impious expressions, which the imprudent Christian might too carelessly utter, or too patiently hear.⁴⁹

The dangerous temptations which on every side lurked in ambush to surprise the unguarded believer assailed him with redoubled violence on the days of solemn festivals. So artfully were they framed and disposed throughout the year that superstition always wore the appearance of pleasure, and often of virtue.⁵⁰ Some of the most sacred festivals in the Roman ritual were destined to salute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity, to indulge the pious remembrance of the dead and living, to ascertain the inviolable bounds of property, to hail, on the return of spring, the genial powers of fecundity, to perpetuate the two memorable eras of Rome, the foundation of the city and that of the republic, and to restore, during the humane licence of the Saturnalia, the primitive equality of mankind. Some idea may be conceived of the abhorrence of the Christians for such impious ceremonies, by the scrupulous delicacy which they displayed on a much less alarming occasion. On days of general festivity, it was the custom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might, perhaps, have been tolerated as a mere civil institution. But it most unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the household gods, that the laurel was sacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a symbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their first origin to the service of superstition. The trembling Christians, who were persuaded in this instance to comply with the fashion of their country and the commands of the magistrate, laboured under the most gloomy apprehensions, from the reproaches of their own conscience, the censures of the church, and the denunciations of divine vengeance.⁵¹

Such was the anxious diligence which was required to guard the chastity of the gospel from the infectious breath of idolatry. The superstitious observances of public or private rites were carelessly practised, from education and habit, by the followers of the established religion. But, as often as they occurred, they afforded the Christians an opportunity of declaring and confirming their zealous opposition. By these frequent protestations, their attachment to the faith was continually fortified, and, in proportion to the increase of zeal, they combated with the more ardour and success in the holy war which they had undertaken against the empire of the dæmons.

II. The writings of Cicero⁵² represent, in the most lively colours, the ignorance, the errors, and the uncertainty of the ancient philosophers, with regard to the immortality of the soul. When they are desirous of arming their disciples against the fear of death, they inculcate, as an obvious though melancholy position, that the fatal stroke of our dissolution releases us from the calamities of life, and that those can no longer suffer who no longer exist. Yet there were a few sages of Greece and Rome who had conceived a more exalted, and, in some respects, a juster idea of human nature; though it must be confessed that, in the sublime inquiry, their reason had been often guided by their imagination, and that their imagination had been prompted by their vanity. When they viewed with complacency the extent of their own mental powers when they exercised the various faculties of memory, of fancy, and of judgment, in the most profound speculations, or the most important labours, and when they reflected on the desire of fame, which transported them into future ages far beyond the bounds of death and of the grave; they were unwilling to confound themselves with the beasts of the field, or to suppose that a being, for whose dignity they entertained the most sincere admiration, could be limited to a spot of earth and to a few years of duration. With this favourable prepossession, they summoned to their aid the science, or rather the language, of Metaphysics. They soon discovered that, as none of the properties of matter will apply to the operations of the mind, the human soul must consequently be a substance distinct from the body, pure, simple, and spiritual, incapable of dissolution, and susceptible of a much higher degree of virtue and happiness after the release from its corporeal prison. From these spacious and noble principles, the philosophers who trod in the footsteps of Plato deduced a very unjustifiable conclusion, since they asserted, not only the future immortality, but the past eternity of the human soul, which they were too apt to consider as a portion of the infinite and self-existing spirit which pervades and sustains the universe.⁵³ A doctrine thus removed beyond the senses and the experience of mankind might serve to amuse the leisure of a philosophic mind; or, in the silence of solitude, it might sometimes impart a ray of comfort to desponding virtue; but the faint impression which had been received in the schools was soon obliterated by the commerce and business of active life. We are sufficiently acquainted with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero, and of the first Cæsars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state. At the bar and in the senate of Rome the ablest orators were not apprehensive of giving offence to their hearers by exposing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and understanding.⁵⁴

Since, therefore, the most sublime efforts of philosophy can extend no farther than feebly to point out the desire, the hope, or at most the probability, of a future state, there is nothing, except a divine revelation, that can ascertain the existence, and describe the condition, of the invisible country which is destined to receive the souls of men after their separation from the body. But we may perceive several defects inherent to the popular religions of Greece and Rome, which rendered them very unequal to so arduous a task. 1. The general system of their mythology was unsupported by any solid proofs; and the wisest among the Pagans had already disclaimed its usurped authority. 2. The description of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and of poets, who peopled them with so many

phantoms and monsters, who dispensed their rewards and punishments with so little equity, that a solemn truth, the most congenial to the human heart, was oppressed and disgraced by the absurd mixture of the wildest fictions.⁵⁵ 3. The doctrine of a future state was scarcely considered among the devout polytheists of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith. The providence of the gods, as it related to public communities rather than to private individuals, was principally displayed on the visible theatre of the present world. The petitions which were offered on the altars of Jupiter or Apollo expressed the anxiety of their worshippers for temporal happiness, and their ignorance or indifference concerning a future life.⁵⁶ The important truth of the immortality of the soul was inculcated with more diligence as well as success in India, in Assyria, in Egypt, and in Gaul; and, since we cannot attribute such a difference to the superior knowledge of the barbarians, we must ascribe it to the influence of an established priesthood, which employed the motives of virtue as the instrument of ambition.⁵⁷

We might naturally expect that a principle, so essential to religion, would have been revealed in the clearest terms to the chosen people of Palestine, and that it might safely have been entrusted to the hereditary priesthood of Aaron. It is incumbent on us to adore the mysterious dispensations of Providence,⁵⁸ when we discover that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is omitted in the law of Moses; it is darkly insinuated by the prophets, and during the long period which elapsed between the Egyptian and the Babylonian servitudes, the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compass of the present life.⁵⁹ After Cyrus had permitted the exiled nation to return into the promised land, and after Ezra had restored the ancient records of their religion, two celebrated sects, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, insensibly arose at Jerusalem.⁶⁰ The former, selected from the more opulent and distinguished ranks of society, were strictly attached to the literal sense of the Mosaic law, and they piously rejected the immortality of the soul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the Divine book, which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of scripture the Pharisees added that of tradition, and they accepted, under the name of traditions, several speculative tenets from the philosophy or religion of the Eastern nations. The doctrines of fate or predestination, of angels and spirits, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, were in the number of these new articles of belief; and, as the Pharisees, by the austerity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewish people, the immortality of the soul became the prevailing sentiment of the synagogue, under the reign of the Asmonæan princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itself with such a cold and languid assent as might satisfy the mind of a Polytheist; and, as soon as they admitted the idea of a future state, they embraced it with the zeal which has always formed the characteristic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability: and it was still necessary that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of Divine truth from the authority and example of Christ.

When the promise of eternal happiness was proposed to mankind, on condition of adopting the faith and of observing the precepts of the gospel, it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion,

of every rank, and of every province in the Roman empire. The ancient Christians were animated by a contempt for their present existence, and by a just confidence of immortality, of which the doubtful and imperfect faith of modern ages cannot give us any adequate notion. In the primitive church, the influence of truth was very powerfully strengthened by an opinion which, however it may deserve respect for its usefulness and antiquity, has not been found agreeable to experience. It was universally believed that the end of the world and the kingdom of Heaven were at hand. The near approach of this wonderful event had been predicted by the apostles; the tradition of it was preserved by their earliest disciples, and those who understood in their literal sense the discourses of Christ himself were obliged to expect the second and glorious coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, before that generation was totally extinguished, which had beheld his humble condition upon earth, and which might still be witness of the calamities of the Jews under Vespasian or Hadrian. The revolution of seventeen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation; but, as long as, for wise purposes, this error was permitted to subsist in the church, it was productive of the most salutary effects on the faith and practice of Christians, who lived in the lawful expectation of that moment when the globe itself, and all the various race of mankind, should tremble at the appearance of their divine judge.[61](#)

The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to six thousand years.[62](#) By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labour and contention, which was now almost elapsed,[63](#) would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection. So pleasing was this hope to the mind of believers that the *New Jerusalem*, the seat of this blissful kingdom, was quickly adorned with all the gayest colours of the imagination. A felicity consisting only of pure and spiritual pleasure would have appeared too refined for its inhabitants, who were still supposed to possess their human nature and senses. A garden of Eden, with the amusements of the pastoral life, was no longer suited to the advanced state of society which prevailed under the Roman empire. A city was therefore erected of gold and precious stones, and a supernatural plenty of corn and wine was bestowed on the adjacent territory; in the free enjoyment of whose spontaneous productions the happy and benevolent people was never to be restrained by any jealous laws of exclusive property.[64](#) The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr[65](#) and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine.[66](#) Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers; and it seems so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind that it must have contributed, in a very considerable degree, to the progress of the Christian faith. But, when the edifice of the church was almost completed, the temporary support was laid aside. The doctrine of Christ's reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd

invention of heresy and fanaticism.[67](#) A mysterious prophecy, which still forms a part of the sacred canon, but which was thought to favour the exploded sentiment, has very narrowly escaped the proscription of the church.[68](#)

Whilst the happiness and glory of a temporal reign were promised to the disciples of Christ, the most dreadful calamities were denounced against an unbelieving world. The edification of the new Jerusalem was to advance by equal steps with the destruction of the mystic Babylon; and, as long as the emperors who reigned before Constantine persisted in the profession of idolatry, the epithet of Babylon was applied to the city and to the empire of Rome. A regular series was prepared of all the moral and physical evils which can afflict a flourishing nation; intestine discord, and the invasion of the fiercest barbarians from the unknown regions of the North; pestilence and famine, comets and eclipses, earthquakes and inundations.[69](#) All these were only so many preparatory and alarming signs of the great catastrophe of Rome, when the country of the Scipios and Cæsars should be consumed by a flame from Heaven, and the city of the seven hills, with her palaces, her temples, and her triumphal arches, should be buried in a vast lake of fire and brimstone. It might, however, afford some consolation to Roman vanity, that the period of their empire would be that of the world itself; which, as it had once perished by the element of water, was destined to experience a second and a speedy destruction from the element of fire. In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Christian very happily coincided with the tradition of the East, the philosophy of the Stoics, and the analogy of Nature; and even the country which, from religious motives, had been chosen for the origin and principal scene of the conflagration, was the best adapted for that purpose by natural and physical causes; by its deep caverns, beds of sulphur, and numerous volcanoes, of which those of Ætna, of Vesuvius, and of Lipari exhibit a very imperfect representation. The calmest and most intrepid sceptic could not refuse to acknowledge that the destruction of the present system of the world by fire was in itself extremely probable. The Christian, who founded his belief much less on the fallacious arguments of reason than on the authority of tradition and the interpretation of scripture, expected it with terror and confidence, as a certain and approaching event; and, as his mind was perpetually filled with the solemn idea, he considered every disaster that happened to the empire as an infallible symptom of an expiring world.[70](#)

The condemnation of the wisest and most virtuous of the Pagans, on account of their ignorance or disbelief of the divine truth, seems to offend the reason and the humanity of the present age.[71](#) But the primitive church, whose faith was of a much firmer consistence, delivered over, without hesitation, to eternal torture the far greater part of the human species. A charitable hope might perhaps be indulged in favour of Socrates, or some other sages of antiquity, who had consulted the light of reason before that of the gospel had arisen.[72](#) But it was unanimously affirmed that those who, since the birth or the death of Christ, had obstinately persisted in the worship of the dæmons, neither deserved, nor could expect, a pardon from the irritated justice of the Deity. These rigid sentiments, which had been unknown to the ancient world, appear to have infused a spirit of bitterness into a system of love and harmony. The ties of blood and friendship were frequently torn asunder by the difference of religious faith; and the Christians, who, in this world, found themselves oppressed by the power of the Pagans, were sometimes seduced by resentment and spiritual pride to

delight in the prospect of their future triumph. “You are fond of spectacles,” exclaims the stern Tertullian; “expect the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment of the universe. How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, and fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates, who persecuted the name of the Lord, liquefying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames, with their deluded scholars; so many celebrated poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Minos, but of Christ; so many tragedians, more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; so many dancers —!” But the humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the rest of this infernal description, which the zealous African pursues in a long variety of affected and unfeeling witticisms.[73](#)

Doubtless there were many among the primitive Christians of a temper more suitable to the meekness and charity of their profession. There were many who felt a sincere compassion for the danger of their friends and countrymen, and who exerted the most benevolent zeal to save them from the impending destruction. The careless Polytheist, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, against which neither his priests nor his philosophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might assist the progress of his faith and reason; and, if he could once persuade himself to suspect that the Christian religion might possibly be true, it became an easy task to convince him that it was the safest and most prudent party that he could possibly embrace.

III. The supernatural gifts, which even in this life were ascribed to the Christians above the rest of mankind, must have conduced to their own comfort, and very frequently to the conviction of infidels. Besides the occasional prodigies, which might sometimes be effected by the immediate interposition of the Deity when he suspended the laws of Nature for the service of religion, the Christian church, from the time of the apostles and their first disciples,[74](#) has claimed an uninterrupted succession of miraculous powers, the gift of tongues, of vision and of prophecy, the power of expelling dæmons, of healing the sick, and of raising the dead. The knowledge of foreign languages was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himself was left to struggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect whilst he preached the gospel to the natives of Gaul.[75](#) The divine inspiration, whether it was conveyed in the form of a waking or of a sleeping vision, is described as a favour very liberally bestowed on all ranks of the faithful, on women as on elders, on boys as well as upon bishops. When their devout minds were sufficiently prepared by a course of prayer, of fasting, and of vigils to receive the extraordinary impulse, they were transported out of their senses, and delivered in ecstasy what was inspired, being mere organs of the Holy Spirit, just as a pipe or flute is of him who blows into it.[76](#) We may add that the design of these visions was, for the most part, either to disclose the future history, or to guide the present administration, of the church. The expulsion of the dæmons from the bodies of those unhappy persons whom they had been permitted to torment was considered as a signal, though ordinary, triumph of religion, and is repeatedly alleged by the ancient apologists as the most convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity. The awful ceremony was usually performed in a public manner, and in the presence of a great number of spectators; the patient was

relieved by the power or skill of the exorcist, and the vanquished dæmon was heard to confess that he was one of the fabled gods of antiquity, who had impiously usurped the adoration of mankind.⁷⁷ But the miraculous cure of diseases, of the most inveterate or even præternatural kind, can no longer occasion any surprise, when we recollect that in the days of Irenæus, about the end of the second century, the resurrection of the dead was very far from being esteemed an uncommon event; that the miracle was frequently performed on necessary occasions, by great fasting and the joint supplication of the church of the place, and that the persons thus restored to their prayers had lived afterwards among them many years.⁷⁸ At such a period, when faith could boast of so many wonderful victories over death, it seems difficult to account for the scepticism of those philosophers who still rejected and derided the doctrine of the resurrection. A noble Grecian had rested on this important ground the whole controversy, and promised Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, that, if he could be gratified with the sight of a single person who had been actually raised from the dead, he would immediately embrace the Christian religion. It is somewhat remarkable that the prelate of the first Eastern church, however anxious for the conversion of his friend, thought proper to decline this fair and reasonable challenge.⁷⁹

The miracles of the primitive church, after obtaining the sanction of ages, have been lately attacked in a very free and ingenious inquiry;⁸⁰ which, though it has met with the most favourable reception from the Public, appears to have excited a general scandal among the divines of our own as well as of the other Protestant churches of Europe.⁸¹ Our different sentiments on this subject will be much less influenced by any particular arguments than by our habits of study and reflection; and, above all, by the degree of the evidence which we have accustomed ourselves to require for the proof of a miraculous event. The duty of an historian does not call upon him to interpose his private judgment in this nice and important controversy; but he ought not to dissemble the difficulty of adopting such a theory as may reconcile the interest of religion with that of reason, of making a proper application of that theory, and of defining with precision the limits of that happy period, exempt from error and from deceit, to which we might be disposed to extend the gift of supernatural powers. From the first of the fathers to the last of the popes, a succession of bishops, of saints, of martyrs, and of miracles is continued without interruption, and the progress of superstition was so gradual and almost imperceptible that we know not in what particular link we should break the chain of tradition. Every age bears testimony to the wonderful events by which it was distinguished, and its testimony appears no less weighty and respectable than that of the preceding generation, till we are insensibly led on to accuse our own inconsistency, sistency, if in the eighth or in the twelfth century we deny to the venerable Bede, or to the holy Bernard, the same degree of confidence which, in the second century, we had so liberally granted to Justin or to Irenæus.⁸² If the truth of any of those miracles is appreciated by their apparent use and propriety, every age had unbelievers to convince, heretics to confute, and idolatrous nations to convert; and sufficient motives might always be produced to justify the interposition of Heaven. And yet, since every friend to revelation is persuaded of the reality, and every reasonable man is convinced of the cessation, of miraculous powers, it is evident that there must have been *some period* in which they were either suddenly or gradually withdrawn from the Christian church. Whatever era is chosen for that purpose, the death of the apostles, the conversion of the Roman

empire, or the extinction of the Arian heresy,⁸³ the insensibility of the Christians who lived at that time will equally afford a just matter of surprise. They still supported their pretensions after they had lost their power. Credulity performed the office of faith; fanaticism was permitted to assume the language of inspiration, and the effects of accident or contrivance were ascribed to supernatural causes. The recent experience of genuine miracles should have instructed the Christian world in the ways of Providence and habituated their eye (if we may use a very inadequate expression) to the style of the divine artist. Should the most skilful painter of modern Italy presume to decorate his feeble imitations with the name of Raphael or of Correggio, the insolent fraud would be soon discovered and indignantly rejected.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the miracles of the primitive church since the time of the apostles, this unresisting softness of temper, so conspicuous among the believers of the second and third centuries, proved of some accidental benefit to the cause of truth and religion. In modern times, a latent, and even involuntary, scepticism adheres to the most pious dispositions. Their admission of supernatural truths is much less an active consent than a cold and passive acquiescence.

Accustomed long since to observe and to respect the invariable order of Nature, our reason, or at least our imagination, is not sufficiently prepared to sustain the visible action of the Deity. But, in the first ages of Christianity, the situation of mankind was extremely different. The most curious, or the most credulous, among the Pagans were often persuaded to enter into a society which asserted an actual claim of miraculous powers. The primitive Christians perpetually trod on mystic ground, and their minds were exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They felt, or they fancied, that on every side they were incessantly assaulted by dæmons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and surprisingly delivered from danger, sickness, and from death itself, by the supplications of the church. The real or imaginary prodigies, of which they so frequently conceived themselves to be the objects, the instruments, or the spectators, very happily disposed them to adopt, with the same ease, but with far greater justice, the authentic wonders of the evangelic history; and thus miracles that exceeded not the measure of their own experience inspired them with the most lively assurance of mysteries which were acknowledged to surpass the limits of their understanding. It is this deep impression of supernatural truths which has been so much celebrated under the name of faith; a state of mind described as the surest pledge of the divine favour and of future felicity, and recommended as the first or perhaps the only merit of a Christian. According to the more rigid doctors, the moral virtues, which may be equally practised by infidels, are destitute of any value or efficacy in the work of our justification.

IV. But the primitive Christian demonstrated his faith by his virtues; and it was very justly supposed that the divine persuasion, which enlightened or subdued the understanding, must, at the same time, purify the heart, and direct the actions, of the believer. The first apologists of Christianity who justify the innocence of their brethren, and the writers of a later period who celebrate the sanctity of their ancestors, display, in the most lively colours, the reformation of manners which was introduced into the world by the preaching of the gospel. As it is my intention to remark only such human causes as were permitted to second the influence of revelation, I shall slightly mention two motives which might naturally render the lives of the primitive

Christians much purer and more austere than those of their Pagan contemporaries, or their degenerate successors: repentance for their past sins, and the laudable desire of supporting the reputation of the society in which they were engaged.

It is a very ancient reproach, suggested by the ignorance or the malice of infidelity, that the Christians allured into their party the most atrocious criminals, who, as soon as they were touched by a sense of remorse, were easily persuaded to wash away, in the water of baptism, the guilt of their past conduct, for which the temples of the gods refused to grant them any expiation. But this reproach, when it is cleared from misrepresentation, contributes as much to the honour as it did to the increase of the church.⁸⁴ The friends of Christianity may acknowledge without a blush that many of the most eminent saints had been before their baptism the most abandoned sinners. Those persons who in the world had followed, though in an imperfect manner, the dictates of benevolence and propriety, derived such a calm satisfaction from the opinion of their own rectitude, as rendered them much less susceptible of the sudden emotions of shame, of grief, and of terror, which have given birth to so many wonderful conversions. After the example of their Divine Master, the missionaries of the gospel disdained not the society of men, and especially of women, oppressed by the consciousness, and very often by the effects, of their vices. As they emerged from sin and superstition to the glorious hope of immortality, they resolved to devote themselves to a life, not only of virtue, but of penitence. The desire of perfection became the ruling passion of their soul; and it is well known that, while reason embraces a cold mediocrity, our passions hurry us, with rapid violence, over the space which lies between the most opposite extremes.

When the new converts had been enrolled in the number of the faithful and were admitted to the sacraments of the church, they found themselves restrained from relapsing into their past disorders by another consideration of a less spiritual, but of a very innocent and respectable nature. Any particular society that has departed from the great body of the nation or the religion to which it belonged immediately becomes the object of universal as well as invidious observation. In proportion to the smallness of its numbers, the character of the society may be affected by the virtue and vices of the persons who compose it; and every member is engaged to watch with the most vigilant attention over his own behaviour and over that of his brethren, since, as he must expect to incur a part of the common disgrace, he may hope to enjoy a share of the common reputation. When the Christians of Bithynia were brought before the tribunal of the younger Pliny, they assured the proconsul that, far from being engaged in any unlawful conspiracy, they were bound by a solemn obligation to abstain from the commission of those crimes which disturb the private or public peace of society, from theft, robbery, adultery, perjury, and fraud.⁸⁵ Near a century afterwards, Tertullian, with an honest pride, could boast that very few Christians had suffered by the hand of the executioner, except on account of their religion.⁸⁶ Their serious and sequestered life, averse to the gay luxury of the age, insured them to chastity, temperance, economy, and all the sober and domestic virtues. As the greater number were of some trade or profession, it was incumbent on them, by the strictest integrity and the fairest dealing, to remove the suspicions which the profane are too apt to conceive against the appearances of sanctity. The contempt of the world exercised them in the habits of humility, meekness, and patience. The more they were

persecuted, the more closely they adhered to each other. Their mutual charity and unsuspecting confidence has been remarked by infidels, and was too often abused by perfidious friends.[87](#)

It is a very honourable circumstance for the morals of the primitive Christians, that even their faults, or rather errors, were derived from an excess of virtue. The bishops and doctors of the church, whose evidence attests, and whose authority might influence, the professions, the principles, and even the practice, of their contemporaries, had studied the scriptures with less skill than devotion, and they often received, in the most literal sense, those rigid precepts of Christ and the apostles to which the prudence of succeeding commentators has applied a looser and more figurative mode of interpretation. Ambitious to exalt the perfection of the gospel above the wisdom of philosophy, the zealous fathers have carried the duties of self-mortification, of purity, and of patience to a height which it is scarcely possible to attain, and much less to preserve, in our present state of weakness and corruption. A doctrine so extraordinary and so sublime must inevitably command the veneration of the people; but it was ill calculated to obtain the suffrage of those worldly philosophers who, in the conduct of this transitory life, consult only the feelings of nature and the interest of society.[88](#)

There are two very natural propensities which we may distinguish in the most virtuous and liberal dispositions, the love of pleasure and the love of action. If the former be refined by art and learning, improved by the charms of social intercourse, and corrected by a just regard to economy, to health, and to reputation, it is productive of the greatest part of the happiness of private life. The love of action is a principle of a much stronger and more doubtful nature. It often leads to anger, to ambition, and to revenge; but, when it is guided by the sense of propriety and benevolence, it becomes the parent of every virtue; and, if those virtues are accompanied with equal abilities, a family, a state, or an empire may be indebted for their safety and prosperity to the undaunted courage of a single man. To the love of pleasure we may therefore ascribe most of the agreeable, to the love of action we may attribute most of the useful and respectable qualifications. The character in which both the one and the other should be united and harmonised would seem to constitute the most perfect idea of human nature. The insensible and inactive disposition, which should be supposed alike destitute of both, would be rejected, by the common consent of mankind, as utterly incapable of procuring any happiness to the individual, or any public benefit to the world. But it was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful.

The acquisition of knowledge, the exercise of our reason or fancy, and the cheerful flow of unguarded conversation, may employ the leisure of a liberal mind. Such amusements, however, were rejected with abhorrence, or admitted with the utmost caution, by the severity of the fathers, who despised all knowledge that was not useful to salvation, and who considered all levity of discourse as a criminal abuse of the gift of speech. In our present state of existence, the body is so inseparably connected with the soul that it seems to be our interest to taste, with innocence and moderation, the enjoyments of which that faithful companion is susceptible. Very different was the reasoning of our devout predecessors; vainly aspiring to imitate the perfection of

angels, they disdained, or they affected to disdain, every earthly and corporeal delight.⁸⁹ Some of our senses indeed are necessary for our preservation, others for our subsistence, and others again for our information, and thus far it was impossible to reject the use of them. The first sensation of pleasure was marked as the first moment of their abuse. The unfeeling candidate for Heaven was instructed, not only to resist the grosser allurements of the taste or smell, but even to shut his ears against the profane harmony of sounds, and to view with indifference the most finished productions of human art. Gay apparel, magnificent houses, and elegant furniture were supposed to unite the double guilt of pride and of sensuality: a simple and mortified appearance was more suitable to the Christian who was certain of his sins and doubtful of his salvation. In their censures of luxury, the fathers are extremely minute and circumstantial;⁹⁰ and among the various articles which excite their pious indignation, we may enumerate false hair, garments of any colour except white, instruments of music, vases of gold or silver, downy pillows (as Jacob reposed his head on a stone), white bread, foreign wines, public salutations, the use of warm baths, and the practice of shaving the beard, which, according to the expression of Tertullian, is a lie against our own faces, and an impious attempt to improve the works of the Creator.⁹¹ When Christianity was introduced among the rich and the polite, the observation of these singular laws was left, as it would be at present, to the few who were ambitious of superior sanctity. But it is always easy, as well as agreeable, for the inferior ranks of mankind to claim a merit from the contempt of that pomp and pleasure, which fortune has placed beyond their reach. The virtue of the primitive Christians, like that of the first Romans, was very frequently guarded by poverty and ignorance.

The chaste severity of the fathers, in whatever related to the commerce of the two sexes, flowed from the same principle: their abhorrence of every enjoyment which might gratify the sensual, and degrade the spiritual, nature of man. It was their favourite opinion that, if Adam had preserved his obedience to the Creator, he would have lived for ever in a state of virgin purity, and that some harmless mode of vegetation might have peopled paradise with a race of innocent and immortal beings.⁹² The use of marriage was permitted only to his fallen posterity, as a necessary expedient to continue the human species, and as a restraint, however imperfect, on the natural licentiousness of desire. The hesitation of the orthodox casuists on this interesting subject betrays the perplexity of men, unwilling to approve an institution which they were compelled to tolerate.⁹³ The enumeration of the very whimsical laws, which they most circumstantially imposed on the marriage-bed, would force a smile from the young, and a blush from the fair. It was their unanimous sentiment that a first marriage was adequate to all the purposes of nature and of society. The sensual connection was refined into a resemblance of the mystic union of Christ with his church, and was pronounced to be indissoluble either by divorce or by death. The practice of second nuptials was branded with the name of a legal adultery; and the persons who were guilty of so scandalous an offence against Christian purity were soon excluded from the honours, and even from the alms, of the church.⁹⁴ Since desire was imputed as a crime, and marriage was tolerated as a defect, it was consistent with the same principles to consider a state of celibacy as the nearest approach to the divine perfection. It was with the utmost difficulty that ancient Rome could support the institution of six vestals;⁹⁵ but the primitive church was filled with

a great number of persons of either sex who had devoted themselves to the profession of perpetual chastity.⁹⁶ A few of these, among whom we may reckon the learned Origen, judged it the most prudent to disarm the tempter.⁹⁷ Some were insensible and some were invincible against the assaults of the flesh. Disdaining an ignominious flight, the virgins of the warm climate of Africa encountered the enemy in the closest engagement; they permitted priests and deacons to share their bed, and gloried amidst the flames in their unsullied purity. But insulted Nature sometimes vindicated her rights, and this new species of martyrdom served only to introduce a new scandal into the church.⁹⁸ Among the Christian ascetics, however (a name which they soon acquired from their painful exercise), many, as they were less presumptuous, were probably more successful. The loss of sensual pleasure was supplied and compensated by spiritual pride. Even the multitude of Pagans were inclined to estimate the merit of the sacrifice by its apparent difficulty; and it was in the praise of these chaste spouses of Christ that the fathers have poured forth the troubled stream of their eloquence.⁹⁹ Such are the early traces of monastic principles and institutions which, in a subsequent age, have counterbalanced all the temporal advantages of Christianity.¹⁰⁰

The Christians were not less averse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defence of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life, nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or by that of war; even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community.¹⁰¹ It was acknowledged that, under a less perfect law, the powers of the Jewish constitution had been exercised, with the approbation of Heaven, by inspired prophets and by anointed kings. The Christians felt and confessed that such institutions might be necessary for the present system of the world, and they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their Pagan governors. But, while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defence of the empire. Some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to those persons who, before their conversion, were already engaged in such violent and sanguinary occupations;¹⁰² but it was impossible that the Christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes.¹⁰³ This indolent, or even criminal, disregard to the public welfare exposed them to the contempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently asked, What must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the new sect?¹⁰⁴ To this insulting question the Christian apologists returned obscure and ambiguous answers, as they were unwilling to reveal the secret cause of their security; the expectation that, before the conversion of mankind was accomplished, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itself would be no more. It may be observed that, in this instance likewise, the situation of the first Christians coincided very happily with their religious scruples, and that their aversion to an active life contributed rather to excuse them from the service, than to exclude them from the honours, of the state and army.

V. But the human character, however it may be exalted or depressed by a temporary enthusiasm, will return, by degrees, to its proper and natural level, and will resume those passions that seem the most adapted to its present condition. The primitive Christians were dead to the business and pleasures of the world; but their love of action, which could never be entirely extinguished, soon revived, and found a new occupation in the government of the church. A separate society, which attacked the established religion of the empire, was obliged to adopt some form of internal policy, and to appoint a sufficient number of ministers, entrusted not only with the spiritual functions, but even with the temporal direction, of the Christian commonwealth. The safety of that society, its honour, its aggrandisement, were productive, even in the most pious minds, of a spirit of patriotism, such as the first of the Romans had felt for the republic, and sometimes, of a similar indifference in the use of whatever means might probably conduce to so desirable an end. The ambition of raising themselves or their friends to the honours and offices of the church was disguised by the laudable intention of devoting to the public benefit the power and consideration which, for that purpose only, it became their duty to solicit. In the exercise of their functions, they were frequently called upon to detect the errors of heresy, or the arts of faction, to oppose the designs of perfidious brethren, to stigmatise their characters with deserved infamy, and to expel them from the bosom of a society whose peace and happiness they had attempted to disturb. The ecclesiastical governors of the Christians were taught to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove; but, as the former was refined, so the latter was insensibly corrupted, by the habits of government. In the church as well as in the world the persons who were placed in any public station rendered themselves considerable by their eloquence and firmness, by their knowledge of mankind, and by their dexterity in business; and, while they concealed from others, and, perhaps, from themselves, the secret motives of their conduct, they too frequently relapsed into all the turbulent passions of active life, which were tinged with an additional degree of bitterness and obstinacy from the infusion of spiritual zeal.

The government of the church has often been the subject, as well as the prize, of religious contention. The hostile disputants of Rome, of Paris, of Oxford, and of Geneva have alike struggled to reduce the primitive and apostolic model¹⁰⁵ to the respective standards of their own policy. The few who have pursued this inquiry with more candour and impartiality are of opinion¹⁰⁶ that the apostles declined the office of legislation, and rather chose to endure some partial scandals and divisions than to exclude the Christians of a future age from the liberty of varying their forms of ecclesiastical government according to the changes of times and circumstances. The scheme of policy which, under their approbation, was adopted for the use of the first century may be discovered from the practice of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, or of Corinth. The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution. The want of discipline and human learning was supplied by the occasional assistance of the *prophets*,¹⁰⁷ who were called to that function, without distinction of age, of sex, or of natural abilities, and who, as often as they felt the divine impulse, poured forth the effusions of the spirit in the assembly of the faithful. But these extraordinary gifts were frequently abused or misapplied by the prophetic teachers. They displayed them at an improper season, presumptuously

disturbed the service of the assembly, and by their pride or mistaken zeal they introduced, particularly into the apostolic church of Corinth, a long and melancholy train of disorders.[108](#) As the institution of prophets became useless, and even pernicious, their powers were withdrawn and their office abolished. The public functions of religion were solely entrusted to the established ministers of the church, the *bishops* and the *presbyters*; two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office and the same order of persons. The name of Presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of Bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the Christians who were committed to their pastoral care. In proportion to the respective numbers of the faithful, a larger or smaller number of these *episcopal presbyters* guided each infant congregation with equal authority and with united councils.[109](#)

But the most perfect equality of freedom requires the directing hand of a superior magistrate; and the order of public deliberations soon introduces the office of a president, invested at least with the authority of collecting the sentiments, and of executing the resolutions, of the assembly. A regard for the public tranquillity, which would so frequently have been interrupted by annual or by occasional elections, induced the primitive Christians to constitute an honourable and perpetual magistracy, and to choose one of the wisest and most holy among their presbyters to execute, during his life, the duties of their ecclesiastical governor. It was under these circumstances that the lofty title of Bishop began to raise itself above the humble appellation of presbyter; and, while the latter remained the most natural distinction for the members of every Christian senate, the former was appropriated to the dignity of its new president.[110](#) The advantages of this episcopal form of government, which appears to have been introduced before the end of the first century,[111](#) were so obvious, and so important for the future greatness, as well as the present peace, of Christianity, that it was adopted without delay by all the societies which were already scattered over the empire, had acquired in a very early period the sanction of antiquity,[112](#) and is still revered by the most powerful churches, both of the East and of the West, as a primitive and even as a divine establishment.[113](#) It is needless to observe that the pious and humble presbyters who were first dignified with the episcopal title could not possess, and would probably have rejected, the power and pomp which now encircles the tiara of the Roman pontiff, or the mitre of a German prelate. But we may define, in a few words, the narrow limits of their original jurisdiction, which was chiefly of a spiritual, though in some instances of a temporal, nature.[114](#) It consisted in the administration of the sacraments and discipline of the church, the superintendency of religious ceremonies, which imperceptibly increased in number and variety, the consecration of ecclesiastical ministers, to whom the bishop assigned their respective functions, the management of the public fund, and the determination of all such differences as the faithful were unwilling to expose before the tribunal of an idolatrous judge. These powers, during a short period, were exercised according to the advice of the presbyteral college, and with the consent and approbation of the assembly of Christians. The primitive bishops were considered only as the first of their equals, and the honourable servants of a free people. Whenever the episcopal chair became vacant by death, a new president was chosen among the presbyters by the suffrage of the whole congregation, every member of which supposed himself invested with a sacred and sacerdotal character.[115](#)

Such was the mild and equal constitution by which the Christians were governed more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles. Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic: and, although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly. As the numbers of the faithful were gradually multiplied, they discovered the advantages that might result from a closer union of their interest and designs. Towards the end of the second century, the churches of Greece and Asia adopted the useful institutions of provincial synods, and they may justly be supposed to have borrowed the model of a representative council from the celebrated examples of their own country, the Amphictyons, the Achæan league, or the assemblies of the Ionian cities. It was soon established as a custom and as a law that the bishops of the independent churches should meet in the capital of the province at the stated periods of spring and autumn. Their deliberations were assisted by the advice of a few distinguished presbyters, and moderated by the presence of a listening multitude.¹¹⁶ Their decrees, which were styled Canons, regulated every important controversy of faith and discipline; and it was natural to believe that a liberal effusion of the Holy Spirit would be poured on the united assembly of the delegates of the Christian people. The institution of synods was so well suited to private ambition and to public interest that in the space of a few years it was received throughout the whole empire. A regular correspondence was established between the provincial councils, which mutually communicated and approved their respective proceedings; and the Catholic church soon assumed the form, and acquired the strength, of a great federative republic.¹¹⁷

As the legislative authority of the particular churches was insensibly superseded by the use of councils, the bishops obtained by their alliance a much larger share of executive and arbitrary power; and, as soon as they were connected by a sense of their common interest, they were enabled to attack, with united vigour, the original rights of their clergy and people. The prelates of the third century imperceptibly changed the language of exhortation into that of command, scattered the seeds of future usurpations, and supplied, by scripture allegories and declamatory rhetoric, their deficiency of force and of reason. They exalted the unity and power of the church, as it was represented in the episcopal office, of which every bishop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion.¹¹⁸ Princes and magistrates, it was often repeated, might boast an earthly claim to a transitory dominion; it was the episcopal authority alone which was derived from the Deity, and extended itself over this and over another world. The bishop were the vicegerents of Christ, the successors of the apostles, and the mystic substitutes of the high priest of the Mosaic law. Their exclusive privilege of conferring the sacerdotal character invaded the freedom both of clerical and of popular elections; and if, in the administration of the church, they still consulted the judgment of the presbyters or the inclination of the people, they most carefully inculcated the merit of such a voluntary condescension. The bishops acknowledged the supreme authority which resided in the assembly of their brethren; but, in the government of his peculiar diocese, each of them exacted from his *flock* the same implicit obedience as if that favourite metaphor had been literally just, and as if the shepherd had been of a more exalted nature than that of his sheep.¹¹⁹ This obedience, however, was not imposed without some efforts on one side, and some resistance on

the other. The democratical part of the constitution was, in many places, very warmly supported by the zealous or interested opposition of the inferior clergy. But their patriotism received the ignominious epithets of faction and schism; and the episcopal cause was indebted for its rapid progress to the labours of many active prelates, who, like Cyprian of Carthage, could reconcile the arts of the most ambitious statesman with the Christian virtues which seem adapted to the character of a saint and martyr.[120](#)

The same causes which at first had destroyed the equality of the presbyters introduced among the bishops a pre-eminence of rank, and from thence a superiority of jurisdiction. As often as in the spring and autumn they met in provincial synod, the difference of personal merit and reputation was very sensibly felt among the members of the assembly, and the multitude was governed by the wisdom and eloquence of the few. But the order of public proceedings required a more regular and less invidious distinction; the office of perpetual presidents in the councils of each province was conferred on the bishops of the principal city, and these aspiring prelates, who soon acquired the lofty titles of Metropolitans and Primates, secretly prepared themselves to usurp over their episcopal brethren the same authority which the bishops had so lately assumed above the college of presbyters.[121](#) Nor was it long before an emulation of pre-eminence and power prevailed among the metropolitans themselves, each of them affecting to display, in the most pompous terms, the temporal honours and advantages of the city over which he presided; the numbers and opulence of the Christians who were subject to their pastoral care; the saints and martyrs who had arisen among them, and the purity with which they preserved the tradition of the faith, as it had been transmitted through a series of orthodox bishops from the apostle or the apostolic disciple, to whom the foundation of their church was ascribed.[122](#) From every cause, either of a civil or of an ecclesiastical nature, it was easy to foresee that Rome must enjoy the respect, and would soon claim the obedience, of the provinces. The society of the faithful bore a just proportion to the capital of the empire; and the Roman church was the greatest, the most numerous, and, in regard to the West, the most ancient of all the Christian establishments, many of which had received their religion from the pious labours of her missionaries. Instead of *one* apostolic founder, the utmost boast of Antioch, of Ephesus, or of Corinth, the banks of the Tiber were supposed to have been honoured with the preaching and martyrdom of the *two* most eminent among the apostles;[123](#) and the bishops of Rome very prudently claimed the inheritance of whatsoever prerogatives were attributed either to the person or to the office of St. Peter.[124](#) The bishops of Italy and of the provinces were disposed to allow them a primacy of order and association (such was their very accurate expression) in the Christian aristocracy.[125](#) But the power of a monarch was rejected with abhorrence, and the aspiring genius of Rome experienced, from the nations of Asia and Africa, a more vigorous resistance to her spiritual, than she had formerly done to her temporal, dominion. The patriotic Cyprian, who ruled with the most absolute sway the church of Carthage and the provincial synods, opposed with resolution and success the ambition of the Roman pontiff, artfully connected his own cause with that of the eastern bishops, and, like Hannibal, sought out new allies in the heart of Asia.[126](#) If this Punic war was carried on without any effusion of blood, it was owing much less to the moderation than to the weakness of the contending prelates. Invectives and excommunications were *their* only weapons; and these,

during the progress of the whole controversy, they hurled against each other with equal fury and devotion. The hard necessity of censuring either a pope, or a saint and martyr, distresses the modern Catholics, whenever they are obliged to relate the particulars of a dispute in which the champions of religion indulged such passions as seem much more adapted to the senate or to the camp.[127](#)

The progress of the ecclesiastical authority gave birth to the memorable distinction of the laity and of the clergy, which had been unknown to the Greeks and Romans.[128](#) The former of these appellations comprehended the body of the Christian people; the latter, according to the signification of the word, was appropriated to the chosen portion that had been set apart for the service of religion; a celebrated order of men which has furnished the most important, though not always the most edifying, subjects for modern history. Their mutual hostilities sometimes disturbed the peace of the infant church, but their zeal and activity were united in the common cause, and the love of power, which (under the most artful disguises) could insinuate itself into the breasts of bishops and martyrs, animated them to increase the number of their subjects, and to enlarge the limits of the Christian empire. They were destitute of any temporal force, and they were for a long time discouraged and oppressed, rather than assisted, by the civil magistrate; but they had acquired, and they employed within their own society, the two most efficacious instruments of government, rewards and punishments; the former derived from the pious liberality, the latter from the devout apprehensions, of the faithful.

I. The community of goods, which had so agreeably amused the imagination of Plato,[129](#) and which subsisted in some degree among the austere sect of the Essenians,[130](#) was adopted for a short time in the primitive church. The fervour of the first proselytes prompted them to sell those worldly possessions which they despised, to lay the price of them at the feet of the apostles, and to content themselves with receiving an equal share out of the general distribution.[131](#) The progress of the Christian religion relaxed, and gradually abolished, this generous institution, which, in hands less pure than those of the apostles, would too soon have been corrupted and abused by the returning selfishness of human nature; and the converts who embraced the new religion were permitted to retain the possession of their patrimony, to receive legacies and inheritances, and to increase their separate property by all the lawful means of trade and industry. Instead of an absolute sacrifice, a moderate proportion was accepted by the ministers of the gospel; and in their weekly or monthly assemblies, every believer, according to the exigency of the occasion, and the measure of his wealth and piety, presented his voluntary offering for the use of the common fund.[132](#) Nothing, however inconsiderable, was refused; but it was diligently inculcated that, in the article of Tythes, the Mosaic law was still of divine obligation; and that, since the Jews, under a less perfect discipline, had been commanded to pay a tenth part of all that they possessed, it would become the disciples of Christ to distinguish themselves by a superior degree of liberality,[133](#) and to acquire some merit by resigning a superfluous treasure, which must so soon be annihilated with the world itself.[134](#) It is almost unnecessary to observe that the revenue of each particular church, which was of so uncertain and fluctuating a nature, must have varied with the poverty or the opulence of the faithful, as they were dispersed in obscure villages, or collected in the great cities of the empire. In the time

of the emperor Decius, it was the opinion of the magistrates that the Christians of Rome were possessed of very considerable wealth; that vessels of gold and silver were used in their religious worship; and that many among their proselytes had sold their lands and houses to increase the public riches of the sect, at the expense, indeed, of their unfortunate children, who found themselves beggars, because their parents had been saints.¹³⁵ We should listen with distrust to the suspicions of strangers and enemies: on this occasion, however, they receive a very specious and probable colour from the two following circumstances, the only ones that have reached our knowledge, which define any precise sums, or convey any distinct idea. Almost at the same period, the bishop of Carthage, from a society less opulent than that of Rome, collected a hundred thousand sesterces (above eight hundred and fifty pounds sterling), on a sudden call of charity, to redeem the brethren of Numidia, who had been carried away captives by the barbarians of the desert.¹³⁶ About an hundred years before the reign of Decius, the Roman church had received, in a single donation, the sum of two hundred thousand sesterces from a stranger of Pontus, who proposed to fix his residence in the capital.¹³⁷ These oblations, for the most part, were made in money; nor was the society of Christians either desirous or capable of acquiring, to any considerable degree, the incumbrance of landed property. It had been provided by several laws, which were enacted with the same design as our statutes of mortmain, that no real estates should be given or bequeathed to any corporate body, without either a special privilege or a particular dispensation from the emperor or from the senate;¹³⁸ who were seldom disposed to grant them in favour of a sect, at first the object of their contempt, and at last of their fears and jealousy. A transaction, however, is related under the reign of Alexander Severus, which discovers that the restraint was sometimes eluded or suspended, and that the Christians were permitted to claim and to possess lands within the limits of Rome itself.¹³⁹ The progress of Christianity and the civil confusion of the empire contributed to relax the severity of the laws; and, before the close of the third century, many considerable estates were bestowed on the opulent churches of Rome, Milan, Carthage, Antioch, Alexandria, and the other great cities of Italy and the provinces.

The bishop was the natural steward of the church; the public stock was entrusted to his care, without account or control; the presbyters were confined to their spiritual functions, and the more dependent order of deacons was solely employed in the management and distribution of the ecclesiastical revenue.¹⁴⁰ If we may give credit to the vehement declamations of Cyprian, there were too many among his African brethren who, in the execution of their charge, violated every precept, not only of evangelic perfection, but even of moral virtue. By some of these unfaithful stewards, the riches of the church were lavished in sensual pleasures, by others they were perverted to the purposes of private gain, of fraudulent purchases, and of rapacious usury.¹⁴¹ But, as long as the contributions of the Christian people were free and unconstrained, the abuse of their confidence could not be very frequent, and the general uses to which their liberality was applied reflected honour on the religious society. A decent portion was reserved for the maintenance of the bishop and his clergy; a sufficient sum was allotted for the expenses of the public worship, of which the feasts of love, the *agapæ*, as they were called, constituted a very pleasing part. The whole remainder was the sacred patrimony of the poor. According to the discretion of the bishop, it was distributed to support widows and orphans, the lame,

the sick, and the aged of the community; to comfort strangers and pilgrims, and to alleviate the misfortunes of prisoners and captives, more especially when their sufferings had been occasioned by their firm attachment to the cause of religion.¹⁴² A generous intercourse of charity united the most distant provinces, and the smaller congregations were cheerfully assisted by the alms of their more opulent brethren.¹⁴³ Such an institution, which paid less regard to the merit than to the distress of the object, very materially conduced to the progress of Christianity. The Pagans, who were actuated by a sense of humanity, while they derided the doctrines, acknowledged the benevolence, of the new sect.¹⁴⁴ The prospect of immediate relief and of future protection allured into its hospitable bosom many of those unhappy persons whom the neglect of the world would have abandoned to the miseries of want, of sickness, and of old age. There is some reason likewise to believe that great numbers of infants who, according to the inhuman practice of the times, had been exposed by their parents were frequently rescued from death, baptized, educated, and maintained by the piety of the Christians, and at the expense of the public treasure.¹⁴⁵

II. It is the undoubted right of every society to exclude from its communion and benefits such among its members as reject or violate those regulations which have been established by general consent. In the exercise of this power, the censures of the Christian church were chiefly directed against scandalous sinners, and particularly those who were guilty of murder, of fraud, or of incontinence; against the authors, or the followers, of any heretical opinions which had been condemned by the judgment of the episcopal order; and against those unhappy persons who, whether from choice or from compulsion, had polluted themselves after their baptism by any act of idolatrous worship. The consequences of excommunication were of a temporal as well as a spiritual nature. The Christian against whom it was pronounced was deprived of any part in the oblations of the faithful. The ties both of religious and of private friendship were dissolved; he found himself a profane object of abhorrence to the persons whom he the most esteemed, or by whom he had been the most tenderly beloved; and, as far as an expulsion from a respectable society could imprint on his character a mark of disgrace, he was shunned or suspected by the generality of mankind. The situation of these unfortunate exiles was in itself very painful and melancholy; but, as it usually happens, their apprehensions far exceeded their sufferings. The benefits of the Christian communion were those of eternal life, nor could they erase from their minds the awful opinion, that to those ecclesiastical governors by whom they were condemned the Deity had committed the keys of Hell and of Paradise. The heretics, indeed, who might be supported by the consciousness of their intentions, and by the flattering hope that they alone had discovered the true path of salvation, endeavoured to regain, in their separate assemblies, those comforts, temporal as well as spiritual, which they no longer derived from the great society of Christians. But almost all those who had reluctantly yielded to the power of vice or idolatry were sensible of their fallen condition, and anxiously desirous of being restored to the benefits of the Christian communion.

With regard to the treatment of these penitents, two opposite opinions, the one of justice, the other of mercy, divided the primitive church. The more rigid and inflexible casuists refused them for ever, and without exception, the meanest place in the holy community, which they had disgraced or deserted, and, leaving them to the remorse of

a guilty conscience, indulged them only with a faint ray of hope that the contrition of their life and death might possibly be accepted by the Supreme Being.¹⁴⁶ A milder sentiment was embraced, in practice as well as in theory, by the purest and most respectable of the Christian churches.¹⁴⁷ The gates of reconciliation and of Heaven were seldom shut against the returning penitent; but a severe and solemn form of discipline was instituted, which, while it served to expiate his crime, might powerfully deter the spectators from the imitation of his example. Humbled by a public confession, emaciated by fasting, and clothed in sackcloth, the penitent lay prostrate at the door of the assembly, imploring, with tears, the pardon of his offences, and soliciting the prayers of the faithful.¹⁴⁸ If the fault was of a very heinous nature, whole years of penance were esteemed an inadequate satisfaction to the Divine Justice; and it was always by slow and painful gradations that the sinner, the heretic, or the apostate was re-admitted into the bosom of the church. A sentence of perpetual excommunication was, however, reserved for some crimes of an extraordinary magnitude, and particularly for the inexcusable relapses of those penitents who had already experienced and abused the clemency of their ecclesiastical superiors. According to the circumstances or the number of the guilty, the exercise of the Christian discipline was varied by the discretion of the bishops. The councils of Ancyra and Illiberis were held about the same time, the one in Galatia, the other in Spain; but their respective canons, which are still extant, seem to breathe a very different spirit. The Galatian, who after his baptism had repeatedly sacrificed to idols, might obtain his pardon by a penance of seven years, and, if he had seduced others to imitate his example, only three years more were added to the term of his exile. But the unhappy Spaniard, who had committed the same offence, was deprived of the hope of reconciliation, even in the article of death; and his idolatry was placed at the head of a list of seventeen other crimes, against which a sentence, no less terrible, was pronounced. Among these we may distinguish the inextinguishable guilt of calumniating a bishop, a presbyter, or even a deacon.¹⁴⁹

The well-tempered mixture of liberality and rigour, the judicious dispensation of rewards and punishments, according to the maxims of policy as well as justice, constituted the *human* strength of the church. The bishops, whose paternal care extended itself to the government of both worlds, were sensible of the importance of these prerogatives, and, covering their ambition with the fair pretence of the love of order, they were jealous of any rival in the exercise of a discipline so necessary to prevent the desertion of those troops which had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross, and whose numbers every day became more considerable. From the imperious declamations of Cyprian we should naturally conclude that the doctrines of excommunication and penance formed the most essential part of religion; and that it was much less dangerous for the disciples of Christ to neglect the observance of the moral duties than to despise the censures and authority of their bishops. Sometimes we might imagine that we were listening to the voice of Moses, when he commanded the earth to open, and to swallow up, in consuming flames, the rebellious race which refused obedience to the priesthood of Aaron; and we should sometimes suppose that we heard a Roman consul asserting the majesty of the republic, and declaring his inflexible resolution to enforce the rigour of the laws. "If such irregularities are suffered with impunity (it is thus that the bishop of Carthage chides the lenity of his colleague), if such irregularities are suffered, there is an end of Episcopal vigour;¹⁵⁰

an end of the sublime and divine power of governing the church, an end of Christianity itself.” Cyprian had renounced those temporal honours which it is probable he would never have obtained; but the acquisition of such absolute command over the consciences and understanding of a congregation, however obscure or despised by the world, is more truly grateful to the pride of the human heart than the possession of the most despotic power imposed by arms and conquest on a reluctant people.

In the course of this important, though perhaps tedious, inquiry, I have attempted to display the secondary causes which so efficaciously assisted the truth of the Christian religion. If among these causes we have discovered any artificial ornaments, any accidental circumstances, or any mixture of error and passion, it cannot appear surprising that mankind should be the most sensibly affected by such motives as were suited to their imperfect nature. It was by the aid of these causes, exclusive zeal, the immediate expectation of another world, the claim of miracles, the practice of rigid virtue, and the constitution of the primitive church, that Christianity spread itself with so much success in the Roman empire. To the first of these the Christians were indebted for their invincible valour, which disdained to capitulate with the enemy whom they were resolved to vanquish. The three succeeding causes supplied their valour with the most formidable arms. The last of these causes united their courage, directed their arms, and gave their efforts that irresistible weight which even a small band of well-trained and intrepid volunteers has so often possessed over an undisciplined multitude, ignorant of the subject, and careless of the event of the war. In the various religions of Polytheism, some wandering fanatics of Egypt and Syria, who addressed themselves to the credulous superstition of the populace, were perhaps the only order of priests¹⁵¹ that derived their whole support and credit from their sacerdotal profession, and were very deeply affected by a personal concern for the safety or prosperity of their tutelary deities. The ministers of Polytheism, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the most part, men of a noble birth, and of an affluent fortune, who received, as an honourable distinction, the care of a celebrated temple, or of a public sacrifice, exhibited, very frequently at their own expense, the sacred games,¹⁵² and with cold indifference performed the ancient rites, according to the laws and fashion of their country. As they were engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, their zeal and devotion were seldom animated by a sense of interest, or by the habits of an ecclesiastical character. Confined to their respective temples and cities, they remained without any connection of discipline or government; and, whilst they acknowledged the supreme jurisdiction of the senate, of the college of pontiffs, and of the emperor, those civil magistrates contented themselves with the easy task of maintaining, in peace and dignity, the general worship of mankind. We have already seen how various, how loose, and how uncertain were the religious sentiments of Polytheists. They were abandoned, almost without control, to the natural workings of a superstitious fancy. The accidental circumstances of their life and situation determined the object, as well as the degree, of their devotion; and, as long as their adoration was successively prostituted to a thousand deities, it was scarcely possible that their hearts could be susceptible of a very sincere or lively passion for any of them.

When Christianity appeared in the world, even these faint and imperfect impressions had lost much of their original power. Human reason, which, by its unassisted strength, is incapable of perceiving the mysteries of faith, had already obtained an easy triumph over the folly of Paganism; and, when Tertullian or Lactantius employ their labours in exposing its falsehood and extravagance, they are obliged to transcribe the eloquence of Cicero or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of these sceptical writings had been diffused far beyond the number of their readers. The fashion of incredulity was communicated from the philosopher to the man of pleasure or business, from the noble to the plebeian, and from the master to the menial slave who waited at his table, and who eagerly listened to the freedom of his conversation. On public occasions the philosophic part of mankind affected to treat with respect and decency the religious institutions of their country; but their secret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward disguise; and even the people, when they discovered that their deities were rejected and derided by those whose rank or understanding they were accustomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehensions concerning the truth of those doctrines to which they had yielded the most implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice exposed a very numerous portion of human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortless situation. A state of scepticism and suspense may amuse a few inquisitive minds. But the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude that, if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Their love of the marvellous and supernatural, their curiosity with regard to future events, and their strong propensity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the visible world, were the principal causes which favoured the establishment of Polytheism. So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition. Some deities of a more recent and fashionable cast might soon have occupied the deserted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the decisive moment, the wisdom of Providence had not interposed a genuine revelation, fitted to inspire the most rational esteem and conviction, whilst, at the same time, it was adorned with all that could attract the curiosity, the wonder, and the veneration of the people. In their actual disposition, as many were almost disengaged from their artificial prejudices, but equally susceptible and desirous of a devout attachment; an object much less deserving would have been sufficient to fill the vacant place in their hearts, and to gratify the uncertain eagerness of their passions. Those who are inclined to pursue this reflection, instead of viewing with astonishment the rapid progress of Christianity, will perhaps be surprised that its success was not still more rapid and still more universal.

It has been observed, with truth as well as propriety, that the conquests of Rome prepared and facilitated those of Christianity. In the second chapter of this work we have attempted to explain in what manner the most civilised provinces of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the dominion of one sovereign, and gradually connected by the most intimate ties of laws, of manners, and of language. The Jews of Palestine, who had fondly expected a temporal deliverer, gave so cold a reception to the miracles of the divine prophet that it was found unnecessary to publish, or at least to preserve, any Hebrew gospel.¹⁵³ The authentic histories of the actions of Christ were composed in the Greek language, at a considerable distance from Jerusalem, and after the Gentile converts were grown extremely numerous.¹⁵⁴ As soon as those

histories were translated into the Latin tongue, they were perfectly intelligible to all the subjects of Rome, excepting only to the peasants of Syria and Egypt, for whose benefit particular versions were afterwards made. The public highways, which had been constructed for the use of the legions, opened an easy passage for the Christian missionaries from Damascus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain or Britain; nor did those spiritual conquerors encounter any of the obstacles which usually retard or prevent the introduction of a foreign religion into a distant country. There is the strongest reason to believe that before the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the faith of Christ had been preached in every province, and in all the great cities of the empire; but the foundation of the several congregations, the numbers of the faithful who composed them, and their proportion to the unbelieving multitude, are now buried in obscurity, or disguised by fiction and declamation. Such imperfect circumstances, however, as have reached our knowledge concerning the increase of the Christian name in Asia and Greece, in Egypt, in Italy, and in the West, we shall now proceed to relate, without neglecting the real or imaginary acquisitions which lay beyond the frontiers of the Roman empire.

The rich provinces that extend from the Euphrates to the Ionian sea were the principal theatre on which the apostle of the Gentiles displayed his zeal and piety. The seeds of the gospel, which he had scattered in a fertile soil, were diligently cultivated by his disciples; and it should seem that, during the two first centuries, the most considerable body of Christians was contained within those limits. Among the societies which were instituted in Syria, none were more ancient or more illustrious than those of Damascus, of Berœa or Aleppo, and of Antioch. The prophetic introduction of the Apocalypse has described and immortalised the seven churches of Asia: — Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira,[155](#) Sardes, Laodicea, and Philadelphia; and their colonies were soon diffused over that populous country. In a very early period, the islands of Cyprus and Crete, the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia, gave a favourable reception to the new religion; and Christian republics were soon founded in the cities of Corinth, of Sparta, and of Athens.[156](#) The antiquity of the Greek and Asiatic churches allowed a sufficient space of time for their increase and multiplication, and even the swarms of Gnostics and other heretics serve to display the flourishing condition of the orthodox church, since the appellation of heretics has always been applied to the less numerous party. To these domestic testimonies we may add the confession, the complaints, and the apprehensions of the Gentiles themselves. From the writings of Lucian, a philosopher who had studied mankind, and who describes their manners in the most lively colours, we may learn that, under the reign of Commodus, his native country of Pontus was filled with Epicureans and *Christians*.[157](#) Within fourscore years after the death of Christ,[158](#) the humane Pliny laments the magnitude of the evil which he vainly attempted to eradicate. In his very curious epistle to the emperor Trajan, he affirms that the temples were almost deserted, that the sacred victims scarcely found any purchasers, and that the superstition had not only infected the cities, but had even spread itself into the villages and the open country of Pontus and Bithynia.[159](#)

Without descending into a minute scrutiny of the expressions, or of the motives of those writers who either celebrate or lament the progress of Christianity in the East, it may in general be observed that none of them have left us any grounds from whence a

just estimate might be formed of the real numbers of the faithful in those provinces. One circumstance, however, has been fortunately preserved, which seems to cast a more distinct light on this obscure but interesting subject. Under the reign of Theodosius, after Christianity had enjoyed, during more than sixty years, the sunshine of Imperial favour, the ancient and illustrious church of Antioch consisted of one hundred thousand persons, three thousand of whom were supported out of the public oblations.¹⁶⁰ The splendour and dignity of the queen of the East, the acknowledged populousness of Cæsarea, Seleucia, and Alexandria, and the destruction of two hundred and fifty thousand souls in the earthquake which afflicted Antioch under the elder Justin,¹⁶¹ are so many convincing proofs that the whole number of its inhabitants was not less than half a million, and that the Christians, however multiplied by zeal and power, did not exceed a fifth part of that great city. How different a proportion must we adopt when we compare the persecuted with the triumphant church, the West with the East, remote villages with populous towns, and countries recently converted to the faith with the place where the believers first received the appellation of Christians! It must not, however, be dissembled that, in another passage, Chrysostom, to whom we are indebted for this useful information, computes the multitude of the faithful as even superior to that of the Jews and Pagans.¹⁶² But the solution of this apparent difficulty is easy and obvious. The eloquent preacher draws a parallel between the civil and the ecclesiastical constitution of Antioch; between the list of Christians who had acquired Heaven by baptism and the list of citizens who had a right to share the public liberality. Slaves, strangers, and infants were comprised in the former; they were excluded from the latter.

The extensive commerce of Alexandria, and its proximity to Palestine, gave an easy entrance to the new religion. It was at first embraced by great numbers of the Therapeutæ, or Essenians of the lake Mareotis, a Jewish sect which had abated much of its reverence for the Mosaic ceremonies. The austere life of the Essenians, their fasts and excommunications, the community of goods, the love of celibacy, their zeal for martyrdom, and the warmth though not the purity of their faith, already offered a very lively image of the primitive discipline.¹⁶³ It was in the school of Alexandria that the Christian theology appears to have assumed a regular and scientific form; and, when Hadrian visited Egypt, he found a church, composed of Jews and of Greeks, sufficiently important to attract the notice of that inquisitive prince.¹⁶⁴ But the progress of Christianity was for a long time confined within the limits of a single city, which was itself a foreign colony, and, till the close of the second century, the predecessors of Demetrius were the only prelates of the Egyptian church. Three bishops were consecrated by the hands of Demetrius, and the number was increased to twenty by his successor Heraclas.¹⁶⁵ The body of the natives, a people distinguished by a sullen inflexibility of temper,¹⁶⁶ entertained the new doctrine with coldness and reluctance; and even in the time of Origen it was rare to meet with an Egyptian who had surmounted his early prejudices in favour of the sacred animals of his country.¹⁶⁷ As soon, indeed, as Christianity ascended the throne, the zeal of those barbarians obeyed the prevailing impulsion; the cities of Egypt were filled with bishops, and the deserts of Thebais swarmed with hermits.

A perpetual stream of strangers and provincials flowed into the capacious bosom of Rome. Whatever was strange or odious, whoever was guilty or suspected, might hope,

in the obscurity of that immense capital, to elude the vigilance of the law. In such a various conflux of nations, every teacher, either of truth or of falsehood, every founder, whether of a virtuous or a criminal association, might easily multiply his disciples or accomplices. The Christians of Rome, at the time of the accidental persecution of Nero, are represented by Tacitus as already amounting to a very great multitude,[168](#) and the language of that great historian is almost similar to the style employed by Livy, when he relates the introduction and the suppression of the rites of Bacchus. After the Bacchanals had awakened the severity of the senate, it was likewise apprehended that a very great multitude, as it were *another people*, had been initiated into those abhorred mysteries. A more careful inquiry soon demonstrated that the offenders did not exceed seven thousand; a number, indeed, sufficiently alarming, when considered as the object of public justice.[169](#) It is with the same candid allowance that we should interpret the vague expressions of Tacitus, and in a former instance of Pliny, when they exaggerate the crowds of deluded fanatics who had forsaken the established worship of the gods. The church of Rome was undoubtedly the first and most populous of the empire; and we are possessed of an authentic record which attests the state of religion in that city, about the middle of the third century, and after a peace of thirty-eight years. The clergy, at that time, consisted of a bishop, forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, as many sub-deacons, forty-two acolytes, and fifty readers, exorcists, and porters. The number of widows, of the infirm, and of the poor, who were maintained by the oblations of the faithful, amounted to fifteen hundred.[170](#) From reason, as well as from the analogy of Antioch, we may venture to estimate the Christians of Rome at about fifty thousand. The populousness of that great capital cannot, perhaps, be exactly ascertained; but the most modest calculation will not surely reduce it lower than a million of inhabitants, of whom the Christians might constitute at the most a twentieth part.[171](#)

The Western provincials appeared to have derived the knowledge of Christianity from the same source which had diffused among them the language, the sentiments, and the manners of Rome. In this more important circumstance, Africa, as well as Gaul, was gradually fashioned to the imitation of the capital. Yet, notwithstanding the many favourable occasions which might invite the Roman missionaries to visit their Latin provinces, it was late before they passed either the sea or the Alps;[172](#) nor can we discover in those great countries any assured traces either of faith or of persecution that ascend higher than the reign of the Antonines.[173](#) The slow progress of the gospel in the cold climate of Gaul was extremely different from the eagerness with which it seems to have been received on the burning sands of Africa. The African Christians soon formed one of the principal members of the primitive church. The practice introduced into that province of appointing bishops to the most inconsiderable towns, and very frequently to the most obscure villages, contributed to multiply the splendour and importance of their religious societies, which during the course of the third century were animated by the zeal of Tertullian, directed by the abilities of Cyprian, and adorned by the eloquence of Lactantius. But if, on the contrary, we turn our eyes towards Gaul, we must content ourselves with discovering, in the time of Marcus Antoninus, the feeble and united congregations of Lyons and Vienna; and, even as late as the reign of Decius, we are assured that in a few cities only, Arles, Narbonne, Toulouse, Limoges, Clermont, Tours, and Paris, some scattered churches were supported by the devotion of a small number of

Christians.¹⁷⁴ Silence is indeed very consistent with devotion, but, as it is seldom compatible with zeal, we may perceive and lament the languid state of Christianity in those provinces which had exchanged the Celtic for the Latin tongue; since they did not, during the three first centuries, give birth to a single ecclesiastical writer. From Gaul, which claimed a just pre-eminence of learning and authority over all the countries on this side of the Alps, the light of the gospel was more faintly reflected on the remote provinces of Spain and Britain; and, if we may credit the vehement assertions of Tertullian, they had already received the first rays of the faith when he addressed his apology to the magistrates of the emperor Severus.¹⁷⁵ But the obscure and imperfect origin of the Western churches of Europe has been so negligently recorded that, if we would relate the time and manner of their foundation, we must supply the silence of antiquity by those legends which avarice or superstition long afterwards dictated to the monks in the lazy gloom of their convents.¹⁷⁶ Of these holy romances, that of the apostle St. James can alone, by its single extravagance, deserve to be mentioned. From a peaceful fisherman of the lake of Gennesareth, he was transformed into a valorous knight, who charged at the head of the Spanish chivalry in their battles against the Moors. The gravest historians have celebrated his exploits; the miraculous shrine of Compostella displayed his power; and the sword of a military order, assisted by the terrors of the Inquisition, was sufficient to remove every objection of profane criticism.¹⁷⁷

The progress of Christianity was not confined to the Roman empire; and, according to the primitive fathers, who interpret facts by prophecy, the new religion within a century after the death of its divine author, had already visited every part of the globe. "There exists not," says Justin Martyr, "a people, whether Greek or barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell under tents, or wander about in covered waggons, among whom prayers are not offered up in the name of a crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things."¹⁷⁸ But this splendid exaggeration, which even at present it would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the real state of mankind, can be considered only as the rash sally of a devout but careless writer, the measure of whose belief was regulated by that of his wishes. But neither the belief nor the wishes of the fathers can alter the truth of history. It will still remain an undoubted fact, that the barbarians of Scythia and Germany who afterwards subverted the Roman monarchy were involved in the darkness of paganism; and that even the conversion of Iberia, of Armenia, or of Æthiopia was not attempted with any degree of success till the sceptre was in the hands of an orthodox emperor.¹⁷⁹ Before that time the various accidents of war and commerce might indeed diffuse an imperfect knowledge of the gospel among the tribes of Caledonia,¹⁸⁰ and among the borderers of the Rhine, the Danube, and the Euphrates.¹⁸¹ Beyond the last-mentioned river, Edessa was distinguished by a firm and early adherence to the faith.¹⁸² From Edessa the principles of Christianity were easily introduced into the Greek and Syrian cities which obeyed the successors of Artaxerxes; but they do not appear to have made any deep impression on the minds of the Persians, whose religious system, by the labours of a well-disciplined order of priests, had been constructed with much more art and solidity than the uncertain mythology of Greece and Rome.¹⁸³

From this impartial, though imperfect, survey of the progress of Christianity, it may, perhaps, seem probable that the number of its proselytes has been excessively magnified by fear on the one side and by devotion on the other. According to the irreproachable testimony of Origen,[184](#) the proportion of the faithful was very inconsiderable when compared with the multitude of an unbelieving world; but, as we are left without any distinct information, it is impossible to determine, and it is difficult even to conjecture, the real numbers of the primitive Christians. The most favourable calculation, however, that can be deduced from the examples of Antioch and of Rome will not permit us to imagine that more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the empire had enlisted themselves under the banner of the cross before the important conversion of Constantine. But their habits of faith, of zeal, and of union seemed to multiply their numbers; and the same causes which contributed to their future increase served to render their actual strength more apparent and more formidable.

Such is the constitution of civil society that, whilst a few persons are distinguished by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obscurity, ignorance, and poverty. The Christian religion, which addressed itself to the whole human race, must consequently collect a far greater number of proselytes from the lower than from the superior ranks of life. This innocent and natural circumstance has been improved into a very odious imputation, which seems to be less strenuously denied by the apologists than it is urged by the adversaries of the faith; that the new sect of Christians was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace, of peasants and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves; the last of whom might sometimes introduce the missionaries into the rich and noble families to which they belonged. These obscure teachers (such was the charge of malice and infidelity) are as mute in public as they are loquacious and dogmatical in private. Whilst they cautiously avoid the dangerous encounter of philosophers, they mingle with the rude and illiterate crowd, and insinuate themselves into those minds, whom their age, their sex, or their education has the best disposed to receive the impression of superstitious terrors.[185](#)

This unfavourable picture, though not devoid of a faint resemblance, betrays, by its dark colouring and distorted features, the pencil of an enemy. As the humble faith of Christ diffused itself through the world, it was embraced by several persons who derived some consequence from the advantages of nature or fortune. Aristides, who presented an eloquent apology to the emperor Hadrian, was an Athenian philosopher.[186](#) Justin Martyr had sought divine knowledge in the schools of Zeno, of Aristotle, of Pythagoras, and of Plato, before he fortunately was accosted by the old man, or rather the angel, who turned his attention to the study of the Jewish prophets.[187](#) Clemens of Alexandria had acquired much various reading in the Greek, and Tertullian in the Latin, language. Julius Africanus and Origen possessed a very considerable share of the learning of their times; and, although the style of Cyprian is very different from that of Lactantius, we might almost discover that both those writers had been public teachers of rhetoric. Even the study of philosophy was at length introduced among the Christians, but it was not always productive of the most salutary effects; knowledge was as often the parent of heresy as of devotion, and the description which was designed for the followers of Artemon may, with equal

propriety, be applied to the various sects that resisted the successors of the apostles. “They presume to alter the holy scriptures, to abandon the ancient rule of faith, and to form their opinions according to the subtle precepts of logic. The science of the church is neglected for the study of geometry, and they lose sight of Heaven while they are employed in measuring the earth. Euclid is perpetually in their hands. Aristotle and Theophrastus are the objects of their admiration; and they express an uncommon reverence for the works of Galen. Their errors are derived from the abuse of the arts and sciences of the infidels, and they corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel by the refinements of human reason.”¹⁸⁸

Nor can it be affirmed with truth that the advantages of birth and fortune were always separated from the profession of Christianity. Several Roman citizens were brought before the tribunal of Pliny, and he soon discovered that a great number of persons of *every order* of men in Bithynia had deserted the religion of their ancestors.¹⁸⁹ His unsuspected testimony may, in this instance, obtain more credit than the bold challenge of Tertullian, when he addresses himself to the fears as well as to the humanity of the proconsul of Africa, by assuring him that, if he persists in his cruel intentions, he must decimate Carthage, and that he will find among the guilty many persons of his own rank, senators and matrons of noblest extraction, and the friends or relations of his most intimate friends.¹⁹⁰ It appears, however, that about forty years afterwards the emperor Valerian was persuaded of the truth of this assertion, since in one of his rescripts he evidently supposes that senators, Roman knights, and ladies of quality were engaged in the Christian sect.¹⁹¹ The church still continued to increase its outward splendour as it lost its internal purity; and in the reign of Diocletian the palace, the courts of justice, and even the army concealed a multitude of Christians who endeavoured to reconcile the interests of the present with those of a future life.

And yet these exceptions are either too few in number, or too recent in time, entirely to remove the imputation of ignorance and obscurity which has been so arrogantly cast on the first proselytes of Christianity. Instead of employing in our defence the fictions of later ages, it will be more prudent to convert the occasion of scandal into a subject of edification. Our serious thoughts will suggest to us that the apostles themselves were chosen by Providence among the fishermen of Galilee, and that, the lower we depress the temporal condition of the first Christians, the more reason we shall find to admire their merit and success. It is incumbent on us diligently to remember that the kingdom of heaven was promised to the poor in spirit, and that minds afflicted by calamity and the contempt of mankind cheerfully listen to the divine promise of future happiness; while, on the contrary, the fortunate are satisfied with the possession of this world; and the wise abuse in doubt and dispute their vain superiority of reason and knowledge.

We stand in need of such reflections to comfort us for the loss of some illustrious characters, which in our eyes might have seemed the most worthy of the heavenly present. The names of Seneca, of the elder and the younger Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch, of Galen, of the slave Epictetus, and of the emperor Marcus Antoninus, adorn the age in which they flourished, and exalt the dignity of human nature. They filled with glory their respective stations, either in active or contemplative life; their excellent understandings were improved by study; Philosophy had purified their

minds from the prejudices of the popular superstition; and their days were spent in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. Yet all these sages (it is no less an object of surprise than of concern) overlooked or rejected the perfection of the Christian system. Their language or their silence equally discover their contempt for the growing sect, which in their time had diffused itself over the Roman empire. Those among them who condescend to mention the Christians consider them only as obstinate and perverse enthusiasts, who exacted an implicit submission to their mysterious doctrines, without being able to produce a single argument that could engage the attention of men of sense and learning.[192](#)

It is at least doubtful whether any of these philosophers perused the apologies which the primitive Christians repeatedly published in behalf of themselves and of their religion; but it is much to be lamented that such a cause was not defended by abler advocates. They expose with superfluous wit and eloquence the extravagance of Polytheism. They interest our compassion by displaying the innocence and sufferings of their injured brethren. But, when they would demonstrate the divine origin of Christianity, they insist much more strongly on the predictions which announced, than on the miracles which accompanied, the appearance of the Messiah. Their favourite argument might serve to edify a Christian or to convert a Jew, since both the one and the other acknowledge the authority of those prophecies, and both are obliged, with devout reverence, to search for their sense and their accomplishment. But this mode of persuasion loses much of its weight and influence, when it is addressed to those who neither understand nor respect the Mosaic dispensation and the prophetic style.[193](#) In the unskilful hands of Justin and of the succeeding apologists, the sublime meaning of the Hebrew oracles evaporates in distant types, affected conceits, and cold allegories; and even their authenticity was rendered suspicious to an unenlightened Gentile by the mixture of pious forgeries, which, under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, and the Sibyls,[194](#) were obtruded on him as of equal value with the genuine inspirations of Heaven. The adoption of fraud and sophistry in the defence of revelation too often reminds us of the injudicious conduct of those poets who load their *invulnerable* heroes with a useless weight of cumbersome and brittle armour.

But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hand of Omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, dæmons were expelled, and the laws of Nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and, pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth,[195](#) or at least a celebrated province of the Roman empire,[196](#) was involved in a præternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history.[197](#) It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena

of Nature, earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect.[198](#) Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe. A distinct chapter of Pliny[199](#) is designed for eclipses of an extraordinary nature and unusual duration; but he contents himself with describing the singular defect of light which followed the murder of Cæsar, when, during the greatest part of the year, the orb of the sun appeared pale and without splendour. This season of obscurity, which cannot surely be compared with the præternatural darkness of the Passion, had been already celebrated by most of the poets[200](#) and historians of that memorable age.[201](#)

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APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL NOTES BY THE EDITOR

1.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GOTH; AND THE GOTHIC HISTORY OF JORDANES — (

P. 4

Sqq.)

The earliest mention of the Goths of which we have any record occurred in the work of Pytheas of Massilia, who lived towards the end of the fourth century and is famous as the earliest explorer of the North. His good faith has been called in question by some ancient writers, but the moderns take a more favourable view of his work, so far as it is known from the references of such writers as Strabo and Pliny. (See Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Alterthumskunde*, I.) His notice of the Goths is cited by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxvii. 2: *Pytheas Guttonibus Germaniae genti accoli aestuarium Oceani Mentonomon nomine spatium stadiorum sex milia; ab hoc diei navigatione insulam abesse Abalum*. The names *Abalum* and *Mentonomon* are mysterious; but there seems ground for inferring that in the fourth century the *Guttones* lived in the same regions on the shores of the Baltic which they occupied in the first century (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* iv. 14; Tacitus, *Germ.* 43, *Gotones*). Nor is there any good ground for refusing to identify the *Gotones* or *Guttones* of the first century with the *Gothi* of the third. (See Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, vol. i. cap. i., to which I would refer for a full discussion, as well as to Dahn's *Könige der Germanen*.)

Our chief source for the early history of the Goths is the *Getica* (or *de origine actibusque Getarum*) of Jordanes (whom it was formerly usual to call *Jornandes*, a name which appears only in inferior MSS.). Jordanes (a Christian name suggesting the river Jordan) was a native of Lower Moesia, and lived in the sixth century in the reign of Justinian. It is not quite certain to what nationality he belonged; but it is less probable that he was a genuine Goth or even a Teuton than that he was of Alanic descent. A certain Candac had led a mixed body of barbarians, Scyri, Sadagarii, and Alans (see *Get.* l. 265) into Lower Moesia and Scythia; they had settled in the land, assimilated themselves to the surrounding Goths, and adopted the Gothic name, more illustrious than their own. The grandfather of Jordanes had been a notary of Candac, and Jordanes himself was secretary of Candac's nephew Gunthigis. This connection of the family of Jordanes with a family which was certainly not Gothic, combined with the name of his father Alanovimuthes, leads us to conclude that Jordanes was an Alan;¹ and this was quite consistent with his being an ardent "Goth." The small

Alanic settlement of Moesia merged itself in the Gothic people, just as the larger Alanic population of Spain merged itself in the Vandalic nation. Beginning life as a scribe, Jordanes ended it as a monk (*Getica*, l. 266), perhaps as a bishop; it has been proposed to identify him with a bishop of Croton who lived at the same time and bore the same name (*Mansi*, ix. 60).

Jordanes wrote his *Getica* in the year 551. It was unnecessary for him to say that he had no literary training (*agrammatus*); this fact is written large all over his work. He states that his book was the result of a three days' study of the Gothic History of Cassiodorus, the learned minister of Theodoric. The fact is that the *Getica* is simply an abridgment of the larger work of Cassiodorus (in twelve books); and modern critics (Usener, Hodgkin) not unreasonably question the "three days" of Jordanes. Thus, when we are dealing with Jordanes, we are really, in most cases, dealing with Cassiodorus; and the spirit, the tendency, of Cassiodorus is faithfully reflected in Jordanes. To praise the Gothic race, and especially the Amal line to which Theodoric belonged, was the aim of that monarch's minister; Jordanes writes in the same spirit and echoes the antipathy to the Vandals which was expressed by Cassiodorus. There are, however, also certain original elements in the *Getica*. There is a significant contrast between the knowledge of the geography of the eastern provinces in the Balkan peninsula and the ignorance of the rest of the empire, which are displayed in this treatise. The stress laid on the institution of Gothic *foederati* may be attributed rather to the Moesian subject of the empire than to the minister of the independent Ostrogothic kingdom.

One of the features of the lost work of Cassiodorus was the manufacture of an ancient history for the Goths by the false identification of that race with the Getae and with the Scythians. The former confusion was suggested by the resemblance of name, the latter by the geographical comprehensiveness of the term Scythia, which embraced all the peoples of the North before they appeared on the scene of history. These fanciful reconstructions are eagerly adopted by Jordanes.

It may be well doubted whether Jordanes consulted on his own account another writer on Gothic history, Ablavius (cp. Gibbon, chap. x. note 5), who is merely a name to us. He cites him with praise (iv. 28 and elsewhere); but there is little doubt that the laudatory references are derived from Cassiodorus. On the other hand it may be supposed that Jordanes, living among Goths, counting himself as a Goth, had some independent knowledge of old Gothic legends and songs to which he refers as mentioned by Ablavius (*ib. quem ad modum et in priscis eorum carminibus pene storico ritu, &c.*). The emigration of the Goths from Scandzia, the island of the far north, their coming to the land of *Oium*, and battle with the *Spali*, are not indeed historical, but are a genuine Gothic legend; and stand on quite a different footing from the Getic and Scythian discoveries of Cassiodorus.

The other work of Jordanes, a summary of Roman history (entitled *de summa temporum vel origine actibusque gentis Romanorum*, usually cited as *Romana*), written partly before, partly after, the *Getica*, does not concern us here. An account of the sources of both works will be found in Mommsen's exhaustive Proœmium to his splendid edition in the *Monumenta Germaniæ historica* (1882), from which for this

brief notice I have selected a few leading points. The reader may also be referred to the clear summary and judicious discussion of Mr. Hodgkin in the introduction and appendix to the first chapter of his *Italy and her Invaders*, and to Mr. Acland's article "Jordanes" in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

Some other points in connection with Jordanes will call for notice when we come to his own time.

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2.

VISIGOTHS AND OSTROGOTHS — (

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We cannot say with certainty at what period the Gothic race was severed into the nations of East and West Goths. The question is well discussed by Mr. Hodgkin, in *Italy and her Invaders*, chap. i. Appendix.

The name Ostrogoth occurs first in the *Life of Claudius Gothicus* in the *Historia Augusta* (written about the beginning of the fourth century), and next in *Claudian*, in *Eutrop.* ii. 153 (at the end of the same century). Our first testimony to the existence of the Visigothic name is later. In the fifth century *Sidonius Apollinaris* speaks of the *Vesi* in two places (*Pan. in Avit.* 456; *Pan. in Major.* 458). Is there any ground for inferring that the Ostrogothic name is the older? It looks rather as if at first (c. 300-400) the distinction was between Ostrogoths and Goths; and that the name Visigoth was a later appellation.

We must emphatically reject the view that *Gruthungi* and *Thervingi* were old names for Ostrogoths and Visigoths respectively and expressed the same distinction. Mr. Hodgkin has noticed the objections supplied by the passages in the *Vita Claudii* and *Claudian*; and they are decisive.

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3.

THE DEFEAT OF VALERIAN, AND THE DATE OF CYRIADES — (

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Valerian set out in 257, held a council of war in Byzantium at the beginning of 258 (Hist. Aug. xxvi. 13). Thence he proceeded to Cappadocia. The north coasts of Asia Minor were suffering at this time from the invasions of the Germans, and it has been conjectured that there may have been an understanding between the European and Asiatic enemies of the Empire (as sometimes in later ages; as once before in the days of Decebalus), and that Valerian aimed at preventing a junction of Persians and Goths. *Vict. Parthica* on coins in 259 point to a victory perhaps near Edessa. Where Valerian was captured is uncertain. Cedrenus says in Cæsarea (i. p. 454); the anonymous Continuator of Dion suggests the neighbourhood of Samosata. The date is uncertain too. There is no trace of Valerian after 260. Inscriptions and sculptures on the rocks of Nakshi Ristan have been supposed to commemorate the Persian victory.

Gibbon in his “probable series of events” has distinctly gone wrong. Two things are certain: (1) Sapor was twice at Antioch, and (2) Cyriades fell before Valerian. The first visit of the Persian monarch to Antioch was in the summer of 256, whither he was accompanied by Cyriades (also called Mariades, see Müller, F.H.G. iv. p. 192), whom he had set up in that city as a Persian vassal. Antioch was won back in the same year or in 257; Cyriades was torn to pieces by the inhabitants, and the Persians were massacred. See Ammian, xxiii. 5; Hist. Aug. xxiv. 2. The second visit of Sapor to Antioch was after the capture of Valerian. See Aur. Victor, Cæsar. 33, 3.

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4.

THE PRETENDERS IN THE REIGN OF GALLIENUS, KNOWN AS THE THIRTY TYRANTS — (

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)

Fati publici fuit, says Trebellius Pollio, who recorded the deeds of the tyrants in the Augustan History, *ut Gallieni tempore quicumque potuit, ad imperium prosiliret*. Gibbon recognised that the significance of these shadow-emperors was only “collective”; they all vanished rapidly; the emperor’s power always proved superior. Their simultaneous appearance only illustrates vividly the general disintegration of the Empire.

It may be well, however, to add a few details, chiefly references, to the succinct account of Gibbon. I take them in the order of his list.

(1) Cyriades. See p. 44, and Appendix 3.

(2) Macrianus. The generals Macrianus and Balista caused the two sons of the former, T. Fulvius Junius Macrianus and T. Fulvius Junius Quietus, to be proclaimed emperors (261 ; see Hist. Aug. Vita Gall. 1, 2). It is a question whether Macrianus their father (he to whom Gibbon imputed the blame of Valerian’s disaster) assumed the purple also. There can, I think, be no doubt that he did not. We have (*a*) the negative evidence that no coins which can be certainly ascribed to him and not to his son are forthcoming; (*b*) the story of his refusal in Hist. Aug. xxiv. 7-11; and (*c*) the positive statement of Zonaras, xii. 24. Against this we have to place the apparent statement in Hist. Aug. xxiii. 1, 2-4 (I say apparent, because the passage is mutilated), and the clear statement in xxiv. 12, 12, which is glaringly inconsistent with the immediately preceding narrative. Macrianus is described as refusing the empire on the ground of old age and bodily weakness, and casting the burden on his sons. Balista, who had offered him the empire, agrees; and then the narrative proceeds: “Macrianus promises (clearly in the name of his sons) a double donation to the soldiers and hurls threats against Gallienus; accordingly he was made emperor along with Macrianus and Quietus his two sons,” as if this were the logical outcome of the proceedings. From this evidence there can I think be only one conclusion.

(3) Balista. He has even less claim than the elder Macrianus to a place among the tyrants; like Macrianus he was only a tyrant-maker. Hist. Aug. xxiv. 12, 4, and 18.

(4) Odenathus. The ground for placing Odenathus among the tyrants seems to be that he assumed the title of king (Hist. Aug. xxiv. 15, 2) and that he had great power in the

East. But a tyrant means one who rebels against the true emperor and usurps the Imperial title. Odenathus never rebelled against Gallienus and never usurped the title Augustus (Σεβαστῆς) or the title Cæsar. He supported the interests of Gallienus in the East and overthrew the real tyranny which was set up by Macrianus. For his services Gallienus rewarded him by the title of ἀποκράτωρ or *imperator*, an unusual title to confer, but not necessarily involving Imperial dignity. (This title is enough to account for the statement in Hist. Aug. xxiii. 12, 1.) As a king he held the same position that, for instance, Agrippa held under Claudius. An inscription of a statue which two of his generals erected in his honour in 271 has been preserved (de Vogüé, Syrie centrale, p. 28) and there he is entitled king of kings. This, as Schiller says (i. 838), should be decisive.

(5) Zenobia. What applies to Odenathus applies to Zenobia as far as the reign of Gallienus is concerned. She received the title Σεβαστή in Egypt, but not till after 271 and doubtless with the permission of Claudius.

(6) Postumus. (See note 86, p. 25.) He made his residence at Trier, was acknowledged in Spain and Britain, and seems to have taken effective measures for the tranquillity and security of Gaul. In 262 he celebrated his *quinquennalia* (Eckhel, vii. 438). His coinage is superior to that of the lawful emperors of the time; it did not pass current in Italy, and the Imperial money was excluded from Gaul (Mommsen, Röm. Münzwesen, 815). It is important to observe that Postumus was faithful to the idea of Rome. He was not in any sense a successor of Sacrovir, Vindex, and Classicus; he had no thought of an anti-Roman *imperium Galliarum*.

(7) Lollianus. This is the form of the name in our MSS. of his Life in the Historia Augusta (xxiv. 5); his true name, Cornelius Ulpianus Laelianus, is preserved on coins (Cohen, v. 60). In a military mutiny (268, in his fifth consulship) Postumus was slain and Laelianus elevated. The new tyrant marched against the Germans, who had taken advantage of this struggle (*subita irruptione Germanorum*) to invade the empire and destroy the forts which Postumus during the year of his rule had erected on the frontier; but he was slain by his soldiers, — it is said, because he was too energetic, *quod in labore nimius esset* (Hist. Aug. xxiv. 5). Victorinus, who succeeded him, had probably something to do with his death.

(8) Victorinus. In 265 Gallienus sent Aureolus to assert his authority in Gaul against Postumus. In the course of the war, an Imperial commander M. Piauvonius Victorinus deserted to the tyrant, who welcomed him and created him Cæsar. Victorinus obtained supreme power after the death of Laelianus. He reigned but a few months; his death is noticed by Gibbon in chap. xi.

Victoria or Victorina. The mother of Victorinus (see chap. xi.). Her coins are condemned as spurious (Cohen, 5, 75).

(9) Marius. M. Aurelius Marius; Eckhel, vii. 454. According to Hist. Aug. xxiv. 8, 1, he reigned only three days after the death of Victorinus. Perhaps he survived Victorinus by three days, but there can be no doubt that he arose as a tyrant, at an

earlier date, perhaps immediately after the death of Postumus. If he had reigned only three days, it is unlikely we should have his coins. Compare Schiller, i. 856.

(10) Tetricus. (See chap. xi.)

(11) Ingenuus. His tyranny was set up in Pannonia and Moesia in the same year as that of Postumus in Gaul (258). He was defeated by Aureolus at Mursa — the scene of the defeat of a more famous tyrant in later times — and slain, at his own request, by his shield-bearer.

(12) Regillianus. A Dacian, who held the post of *dux* of Illyricum; his true name was Regalianus, preserved on coins and in one MS. of the *Historia Augusta*. He had won victories against the Sarmatians, and his name, in its corrupt form, lent itself to the declension of *rex*: “rex, regis, regi, Regi-lianus” (*Hist. Aug.* xxiv. 10, 5). But his reign lasted only for a moment. His elevation was probably due to disaffection produced by the hard measures adopted by Gallienus in Pannonia when he suppressed the revolt of Ingenuus.

(13) Aureolus. (See chap. xi.)

(14) Saturninus. Of him we know nothing. See *Hist. Aug.* xxiv. 23, and xxiii. 9, 1.

(15) Trebellianus. See *Hist. Aug.* xxiv. 26; beyond what is stated there we know nothing. *Palatium in arce Isauriae constituit*. He was slain by an Egyptian, brother of the man who slew Æmilianus, tyrant in Egypt; see below.

(16) Piso. It is probably a mistake to include Piso among the tyrants. He belonged to the party of Macrianus (see above), who in 261 sent him to Greece to overpower the governor Valens. But a curious thing happened. Piso, who had come in the name of a tyrant, supported the cause of the lawful emperor Gallienus (see *Hist. Aug.* xxiv. 21, 4), while Valens, who represented the cause of Gallienus, revolted, and became a tyrant himself. Both Piso and Valens were slain by their soldiers; — the news of Piso’s death had reached Rome by the 25th June (*Hist. Aug. ib.* 3).

(17) Valens. See last note.

(18) Æmilianus. He threatened to starve the empire, which depended for corn on Egypt. There are no genuine coins of this tyrant.

(19) Celsus. Elevated by the proconsul of Africa and the *dux limitis Libyci*. *Hist. Aug.* xxiv. 29.

Of these nineteen, Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, Zenobia, and Piso have no claim to be regarded as tyrants. But the places of Macrianus the father and Balista may be filled by Macrianus the son and Quietus. Thus the number nineteen is reduced to sixteen.

It is worth noting that Pollio, who, as Gibbon says, “expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number” of the thirty tyrants, and as we have seen includes

some who were certainly not tyrants, should omit two names of rebels which are mentioned by Zosimus. In i. 38 (ed. Mendelssohn) this historian says: ἢ τούτῳ δὲ ἡ ἀναστάσις αὐτῶν (Gallienus) Μέμορος τε τὸν Μουρουσίου καὶ Ἀριόλου καὶ Ἀντωνίνου καὶ τῶν πλείονων. Aurelius we know; τῶν πλείονων we know; but who were Memor and Antoninus? Are they mentioned by Pollio under other names or did they not reach the length of an Imperial title? Of Antoninus as far as I know we hear nowhere else, but of Memor we have a notice, in a fragment of the Anonymous Continuer of Dion Cassius (Müller, F.H.G. iv. p. 193), frag. 4, where the mention of a Theodotus recalls him who put to death Æmilianus and makes us think of Egypt. (In the old Stephanian text of Zosimus Κέκροπος is read instead of Μέμορος; but the unknown MS. used by Stephanus seems to have been worthless.)

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5.

ZENOBIA — (

P. 83

Sqq.)

In regard to Gibbon's account of the war of Aurelian with Zenobia, the following points are to be observed: —

- (1) This war preceded the subjugation of Tetricus and Gaul.
- (2) After her husband's death Zenobia took the title βασιλίσα, and while her son Wahballath succeeded to his father's position as *dux Romanorum* and Lord of Palmyra, she really ruled. The name Wahballath, meaning *dea dedit*, was rendered in Greek by ἠθηνό-δωρος.
- (3) The story told by Gibbon from Hist. Aug. xxiii. 13, that Zenobia defeated a Roman army (under one Heraclian) is suspicious (see Schiller, i. 859, note 1); for we find her on good terms with the Roman government immediately after, and she recovers Egypt, which was under the usurper Probus, for Claudius, who was too much occupied with the Gothic danger to proceed himself against the tyrant. Her son Wahballath governed in Egypt as the representative of Claudius, and the circumstance that he was officially named βασιλεύς does not imply that he was a rebel.
- (4) Aurelian on his accession 270 recognised Wahballath as *vir consularis Romanorum Imperator dux Romanorum*; he appeared beside Aurelian on coins; and his mother assumed the title Augusta.
- (5) Wahballath began to issue coins without the head of Aurelian and assumed the title Augustus. This seems to have been a consequence of an estrangement from the Emperor; but we do not know the immediate circumstances. The position which the Palmyrene family occupied was obviously inconsistent with the unity of the Empire.
- (6) The following stages may be marked in the course of the war: (*a*) Probus establishes the authority of Aurelian in Egypt, and the forces of Zenobia fail at Chalcedon; (*b*) Aurelian takes Ancyra and Tyana, and passes into Syria; (*c*) Zenobia's army is driven from Antioch, and (*d*) defeated at Emesa; (*e*) the surrender of Palmyra (early in 272); (*f*) its final destruction (spring 273).
- (7) Von Sallet, who has thrown much light on this episode in his work *Die Fürsten von Palmyra*, thinks that the catastrophe of Palmyra was accomplished before the end of 271. But there are serious objections to his chronology. See Schiller, i. 857-864.

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6.

CORRECTOR ITALIÆ — (

P. 96

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As Gibbon notices, two statements are made in the *Historia Augusta*, as to the honourable provision which Aurelian made for Tetricus. In the Life of Tetricus (xxiv. 24, 5) we read: *correctorem totius Italiæ fecit, id est, Campaniæ, Samni, Lucaniæ, Brittiorum [Bruttii], Apuliæ, Calabriæ, Etruriæ atque Umbriæ, Piceni et Flaminia omnisque annonariæ regionis*; but in the Life of Aurelian (xxvi. 39, 1) Tetricum triumphatum *correctorem Lucaniæ fecit* (so Aurel. Victor. &c.). Both statements cannot be true, and Mommsen (*Ephem. epig.* i. 140) has proved that the first is to be accepted and the second rejected.

We find the idea of a governor of Italy in the famous advice to Augustus which Dion Cassius (52, 21) puts in the mouth of Maecenas. It is suggested that Italy beyond a circuit of a hundred miles from Rome should be governed like the provinces. But as early as 214 we find C. Suetrius Sabinus, a consular, as *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiæ* (C.I.L. x. 5398) and at a later period Pomponius Bassus *πανορθωτῆς πάσης ἰταλίας*. See further Mommsen, *loc. cit.*, and *Staatsrecht*, ii. 1086.

Thus we find that correctors of all Italy were occasionally appointed, during the third century. Therefore, Mommsen argues convincingly (and it is a good instance of the application of a principle of historical criticism), the notice that Tetricus was *corrector Italiæ* is the true one. For a later writer to whom correctors of Lucania were perfectly familiar would never have changed a *corrector Lucaniæ* into a *corrector Italiæ*.

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7.

PROBUS AND THE LIMES GERMANICUS — (

P. 120

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The statement of Gibbon that Probus “constructed a stone wall of a considerable height, and strengthened it by towers at convenient distances” is not warranted by the evidence, which consists entirely of two remarks in his *Life in the Hist. Aug.*: —

(1) c. 13. *contra urbes Romanas et castra in solo barbarico posuit atque illic milites collocavit.*

(2) c. 14. *sed visum est id non posse fieri nisi si limes Romanus extenderetur et fieret Germania tota provincia.* (*id* refers to the command of Probus, that the German dependent tribes should not fight themselves, but, when attacked, seek the aid of the Roman army.)

It will be observed that the only statement of fact is in the first passage, from which we learn that Probus constructed and garrisoned some forts on soil which was then barbarian. The second passage states no fact, but ventilates a, perhaps wild, hypothesis.

It is also to be noticed that the actual Wall, constructed long before the time of Probus, was not a regular wall of hewn stone, and that its length between the points that Gibbon roughly marks was more than 300 (not “near 200”) miles.

It may be added that the limes (both the trans-Rhenane and the trans-Danubian) was probably due chiefly to Domitian and Hadrian.

There is a considerable literature on the Imperial limes; but all previous works will be superseded by “*Der Obergermanischraetische Limes des Römerreichs*,” edited by O. von Sarwey and F. Hettner, and published under the auspices of the Reichs-Limes-Kommission. This work is appearing in parts.

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8.

GERMAN CAMPAIGNS OF DIOCLETIAN, MAXIMIAN, AND CONSTANTIUS (285-299) — (

P. 158

Sqq.)

(1) There was a campaign in spring 285, against German invaders of the Danubian regions, in consequence of which Diocletian assumed the title of *Germanicus Maximus*. Cp. Corp. Insc. Lat. vi. 1116.

(2) In 286 the Alamanni (who, pushed by the Burgundians, had left their old abodes on the Main and established themselves along the banks of the Rhine, within the *limes*, from Mainz to Lake Constance) and Burgundians invaded Gaul. Maximian was at Mainz, in June (Frag. Vat. 271). The Heruls and Chaibones also approached the frontier, but their host was destroyed by Maximian, who allowed plague and famine to work havoc among the Alamannic invaders. See Mamertinus, Pan. Max. v. and Genethl. Max. 17.

(3) At the beginning of 287 marauding expeditions had to be repelled and Maximian won back some territory beyond the Rhine. Mamertinus, Pan. Max. 6, 10.

(4) 291; war with the Franks, of whom large numbers were settled in lands of the Nervii and round Trier. Cp. Incert. Pan. Constant. Cæs. 21, Mamert. Genethl. Max. 7.

(5) 293, summer; Constantius, having taken Gesoriacum, invades the land of the Franks, and, returning victorious, settles a large number as *coloni* in Gaul. It has been conjectured (Schiller, ii. 132) that the regions of the Lower Meuse and Rhine were now once more incorporated in the Empire as the province of Germania Secunda, which is mentioned in the List of provinces found at Verona (see Introduction, p. lviii.).

(6) After the recovery of Britain, Constantius busied himself with the fortification of the Rhine frontier. In 298 the victories of Langres and Windisch (Vindonissa) were won over the Alamanni.

(7) In 299 Constantius invaded the land of the Alamanni; Incert. Pan. Constantio Cæs. 2, 3.

For the determination of the chronology Mommsen's study in the *Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy, 1860, is invaluable.

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9.

DIOCLETIAN'S TARIFF OF MAXIMUM PRICES — (

P. 178

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The most celebrated work of Diocletian in the field of political economy was the edict (referred to by Lactantius in *De Mort. persecutorum*, 7; partial copies of it have been discovered since Gibbon wrote, in the form of inscriptions) fixing maximum prices for provisions and wages, 301 See *Corp. Insc. Lat. iii. 801 sqq.* and *ib. Suppl. p. 1910 sqq.* It had been found that, notwithstanding plenteous harvests, prices and wages went up. The soldiers especially suffered, and, unable to purchase their provisions from their pay, were obliged to draw upon their savings. It is probable that the law was not universal, but applied only to those provinces which were ruled directly by Diocletian; it is also probable that it was enforced only for a few years. For a full discussion see Mommsen's paper in the *Berichte der könsächsischen Ges. d. Wissensch., phil.-hist. klasse*, 1851. The text is published in a convenient form by Mommsen, with notes by Blümner, 1893.

The monetary reforms of Diocletian, though they were not permanent, have some interest in connection with this edict. He coined a new aureus of 60 to a pound of gold; he restored the denarius of silver; and introduced some new copper coins. The relative value of silver to gold seems to have been determined at 14·27 to 1. See Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. 1, App. 1.

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10.

AUTHORITIES FOR MATTERS PERTAINING TO CHRISTIANITY AND THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS — (Chap. XV.)

[By an inadvertency it was not mentioned on p. 263, that C. de Boor has shown it to be highly probable (*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, i. p. 13 *sqq.*) that the Anonymous Continuer of Dion is identical with Peter the Patrician (who lived in the sixth century under Justinian). — It should also be added to the notice of Rufus Festus, vol. i. p. 310, that this writer should be simply called Festus (as C. Wagener observes in his *Jahresbericht* on Eutropius, in *Philologus*, 42, p. 521), as the addition “Rufus” appears only in inferior MSS. It is highly unsafe to speak, as some writers do, of “Rufius Festus,” on the strength of a guess of Mommsen (*Hermes*, 16, p. 605) that the author of the *Breviarium* is identical with the Rufius Festus Avienus of C.I.L. 6, 103. — I am also bound to state that E. Rohde (*Byz. Ztsch.*, 5, p. 1 *sqq.*) and C. Neumann (in the same number of the same journal) agree in ascribing to the tenth cent. the *Philopatris*, which, with Crampe, I assigned to the seventh on p. 131 above; and they urge weighty arguments against Crampe’s view.]

The *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, which was briefly noticed in vol. i. Appendix 1, calls for some further observations here. It always seemed clear that it was ascribed to Lactantius before the end of the fourth century, and possible that L. Cæcilius (the name of the author in the unique MS. found at Moissac, and now in the *Bibl. Nationale*) might be a mistake for L. Cælius, the name of Firmianus Lactantius; accordingly, fortified by the judgments of Teuffel and Ebert, I am inclined (with Schiller, Burckhardt, and others) to accept the identification, and suppose that the difference of style (justly noticed by Gibbon, ch. xx. n. 40) may be explained by difference of subject. Yet a study of the exhaustive investigation of Brandt might go far to convince one that Lactantius was not the author of the *Mortes*, and that Gibbon’s hesitation was thoroughly justified. The arguments of Ebert, the chief champion of the Lactantian authorship (*Ueber den Verfasser des Buches de M. P.*, *Ber. der sächs. Ges. der Wissensch., phil.-hist. Cl.* 1870), have been assailed with force by Brandt, the greatest living authority on Lactantius, in his essay *Ueber die Entstehungsverhältnisse der Prosaschr. des Lact. und des Buches de M. P.* (*Sitzungsber. der Wiener Akad.*, vol. cxxv. Abh. vi. 1892).

(1) There is a serious chronological argument, which in itself (if the facts were correct) would be almost conclusive (first urged by P. Meyer in *Quæst. Lactant. particula prima*, 1878). The author of the *Mortes* was an eye-witness of the persecutions at Nicomedia, where he wrote after the middle of 313 (cp. xii. 2; xiii. 1; xxxv. 4; xlviii. 1; and xlviii. 13; xlix.; lii. 4). But the *Divine Institutions*, which was finished before 310 (Brandt has shown, p. 12 *sqq.*, that it was almost certainly completed in 307-8), though begun at Nicomedia, was finished at Trier, whither

Lactantius must have gone before 310. Therefore, the writer who describes as an eye-witness the persecutions after 310 cannot have been Lactantius.

(2) There are peculiarities in style in the *Mortes* which cannot be explained by the nature of the subject; *e.g.*, “more or less strong vulgarisms, Græcisms, &c., where Lactantius writes correctly” (p. 58, *e.g.*, *misereri* with dat., *idolum*, &c.).

(3) Advocates of the Lactantian authorship appeal to numerous passages which are verbally identical with, or echoes of, passages of Lactantius. But Brandt urges that these must be the work of an inferior imitator, and are in fact a strong argument against the Lactantian authorship. Especially instructive is a comparison of *Mort.* xxxviii. 1 (which Ebert is forced to regard as an interpolation) with *Div. Inst.* vi. 23, § 10-12.

(4) Brandt also insists that the author of the *Mortes* (whose want of *bona fides* is glaringly exhibited in his exaggerated descriptions of Maximin’s lust, *e.g.*, or the cruelty of Galerius; xxxviii. 4; xxi. 5) stands on a lower ethical level than the Lactantius whom we know from his undoubted writings.

(5) The weak argument which rests on the fact that the *Mortes* is dedicated to “Donatus confessor,” and that Lactantius inscribed his *De Ira Dei* to Donatus, is turned by Brandt into an argument on the other side. While the mere identity of a most common name proves nothing, what we know of the two Donati forbids the identification. The Donatus of the *Mort.* was imprisoned in 305 (cf. 16; 35), and underwent the stress of the persecution; but the only thing that Lactantius has to say to his Donatus is to warn him against trusting the authority of philosophers. There is not a hint in the *De Ira Dei* that the person addressed was undergoing imprisonment, which, whether the *De Ira Dei* was prior to 311 (as Brandt has tried to show) or subsequent (as Ebert held), is an argument against the identification of the two Donati.

On the other hand the *Mortes* was ascribed to Lactantius in the course of the fourth century, for Jerome had a copy in 393, on which doubtless the name of Lactantius was inscribed; *De Vir.* Ill. c. 80, *habemus* (I possess) *eius — de persecutione librum unum*. And Brandt has corroborated this view of Jerome’s statement by showing that the person who (c. 370 or not many years later) interpolated the *Divine Institutions* with the addresses to the Emperors (see Brandt, *die Kaiseranreden*, *Sitzungsber. der W. Ak.* 119, 1889), made use of the *Mortes*, supposing it to be Lactantian. This false ascription of the treatise, the work perhaps of a pupil of Lactantius, to Lactantius himself is accounted for by Brandt by the hypothesis that it was published anonymously, and the public, anxious to discover the authorship, were led by the Lactantianisms and the Nicomedian origin to fix on the wellknown writer of the *Divine Institutions*. *L. Cæcili* would be, on this hypothesis, probably a mistake for *L. Cæli* (*i.e.* Lactantii), and not the name of the true author.

As for the date (discussed by Görres in *Philologus*, xxxvi. p. 597 *sqq.*, 1877), Brandt narrows it down to a short period between the end of 314 and the middle of 315 (p. 111). The *Epitome of the Divine Institutions* (its Lactantian authorship has been

vindicated, p. 2-10) was used in the *Mortes*, and was written between the middle of 313 and the conclusion of the *Mortes*. Seeck (who accepts from Idatius 316 as date of Diocletian's death) makes the limits 317 and 321.

On Brandt's arguments I would observe that all except (1) have little cogency. (4) is especially weak; we have a much more glaring example of such inconsistency in the case of Procopius the historian. In regard to (1), Seeck urges (*Gesch. des Unterg. der ant. Welt*, p. 428) Jerome's statement that L. taught Crispus as Cæsar, *i.e.* after 317; Constantine would not before his conversion (312, at earliest) have chosen a Christian preceptor for his son; in 308 Crispus was not more than two years old. There seems indeed to be no reason for supposing that L. went to Trier much before 317; therefore he could be in Nicomedia in 313; and the chief argument against the Lactantian authorship of the *Mortes* breaks down. It may be added that no argument, except one favourable to the identification, can be based on the difference between the names in the MSS., — Cælius and Cæcilius, — in view of the fact that *L. Cæcilius Firmianus* is found in a Numidian inscription (C.I.L. 8, 7241); and Lactantius belonged to the African Diocese (Seeck, *ib.* 426).

On the life of Lactantius see Brandt, *Ueber das Leben des L.*, *Sitzungsber. der W. Akad.*, cxx., 1890; and on the interpolations in the *Divine Inst.* (see above chap. xx. n. 2) his two papers, *Die dualistischen Zusätze*, *ib.* cxviii., 1889, and *Die Kaiseranreden*, *ib.* cxix., 1889.

To understand the historical work of Eusebius of Cæsarea, we must glance at the "Chronographies" of Sextus Julius Africanus, who flourished in the early part of the third century and wrote his chronographical work between 212 and 221. All that is known about him and his work will be found in the invaluable study of H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* (1880). He is the founder of Byzantine chronography. His system is determined by the Jewish idea of a worldepoch of 6000 years; and he divides this into two parts at the death of Phalek. He is concerned to prove that the incarnation took place in the year 5500 (= 2); after which there are 500 years of waiting till the end of the world and the beginning of the millennium or the World-Sabbath. The date of Moses was fixed at 1020 years before the first olympiad by Justus of Tiberias, and this view, to which the apologist Justin gave currency, is maintained by Africanus, who puts Moses in 3707-8 and the first olympiad = first year of Ahaz in 4727-8. A contemporary of Africanus, Hippolytus of Rome, also wrote a chronicle of the world, which Gelzer (ii. 23) designates as a very feeble performance, in erudition far inferior to that of Africanus.

The chronicle of Eusebius, translated into Latin by Jerome, threw that of Africanus into the background. Gelzer (ii. 42 *sqq.*) gives him the credit which he deserves for his excellent critical discussion of the number of years between the Exodus and the building of Solomon's temple. Here we have a contradiction between St. Paul and the Book of Judges on one hand, and the Books of Kings on the other. Eusebius does not hesitate to criticise the inspired numbers with masterly ability, just as if they occurred in profane documents, and rejects the statement of the apostle Paul. "In later patristic literature we find nothing similar. The Greek Church was perfectly speechless at the

boldness which treated the chronological sketch of the apostle like that of a profane author” (Gelzer, ii. 47).

Again the historical instinct of Eusebius is shown in the choice of his era. While Africanus began with Adam, this instinct taught Eusebius that all Hebrew events before Abraham were “prehistoric,” and so he dated events by the years of Abraham, whom he places in 2017, whereas the date of Africanus was 2300. But this was little compared with his boldness in rejecting the received date of Moses, whom he placed in 1512 instead of 1795

In the Ecclesiastical History, the Panegyric on Constantine, and the Life of Constantine (a *Denkschrift* rather than a regular biography; Ranke), the guiding idea of Eusebius is the establishment of a Christian empire, for which Constantine was the chosen instrument. See Ranke’s short suggestive essay in *Weltgeschichte*, ii. 2, 249 *sqq.*; one of his points is that we must not press some deviations in the Life, written after Constantine’s death, from the earlier works. But we must agree with the remark of O. Seeck: “Nichts hat dem Andenken des grossen Kaisers mehr geschadet als das Lügenbuch des Eusebios.” Seeck declines to make any use of the documents contained in it. P. Meyer, *de Vita Const. Eusebiana*, 1883; V. Schultze, *Quellenuntersuchungen zur Vita Const. des Eus.*, in *Zeitsch. für Kirchengesch.*, xiv. p. 503 *sqq.*, 1894; Amedeo Crivellucci, *Della fede storica di Eusebio nella vita di Costantino*, 1888 (Livorno); Görres, *Z. f. wiss. Theol.*, xx. 215 *sqq.*; xxi. 35 *sqq.*; xxxiii. 124 *sqq.*

Two historical fragments, one covering 293-337, the other 474-526, first printed by H. Valois at the end of his edition of Ammian (from a MS. belonging to J. Sirmond, which afterwards passed into the Phillipps collection, and was translated in 1887 from Cheltenham to Berlin), are generally described under the name Anonymus Valesii. This title is misleading, by its suggestion that the two fragments belong to the same work, whereas they have nothing to do with each other; but it is still convenient to refer to them under the old title. Though they have nothing to do with Ammianus, Gardthausen, following the example of Valois, printed them at the end of his edition. The authoritative edition is now Mommsen’s in the *Chronica Minora* (M.G.H.); the first which concerns us here, being printed under the title *Origo Constantini imperatoris* in vol. i. p. 7-11 (1891).

The unknown author of this fragment wrote in the fourth century, and Mommsen designates him as “*optimi et Ammiano neque aetate neque auctoritate inferioris*” and adds that he probably wrote “*ante tempora absolute Christiana*.” Several passages (*e.g.*, 20, 33, 34), which are redolent of the Christian clerical style, are shown to be interpolations derived from Orocius (Mommsen, *pref.* p. 6; *cp.* W. Ohnesorge, *Der Anonymus Valesii de Constantino*, p. 88 *sqq.*, 1885, who has some good remarks on the author’s geographical knowledge, and the probability that he wrote in Italy).

[The *Anonymi Monodia* (first published by Morelli in 1691) was supposed to be (in accordance with its title in the Palatine MS.) a funeral oration on Constantine, the eldest son of Constantine the Great; and on this supposition Gibbon made important use of it (p. 180, n. 26; *cp.* p. 206, n. 71). But it is only necessary to read it carefully to

see that the inscription is false, and that it cannot refer to the younger Constantine. This was proved by Wesseling, who made it probable that the subject of the oration was Theodore Palæologus. As the argument of Gibbon as to Fausta's survival was recently repeated by such a capable scholar as Victor Schultze, with an appeal to the *Monodia* (Brieger's *Zeitschr. f. Kirchengeschichte*, viii. p. 541, apparently he had not read the document), it may be worth while to state briefly the chief decisive points. (I cite from the most recent edition: Anon. *Græci oratio funebris*, by C. E. Frotscher, 1856.) (1) The very first words are quite impossible in an orator of the fourth century: ἄνδρες ὠμαῖοι, μάλλον δὲ τῶν ὠμαίων ποτὲ λείψανα δυστυχή. (2) The subject of the laudation died of a plague (p. 14); Constantine according to our authorities was killed by violence. (3) ἢ τούτοις ἢ Πελοποννήσου πρὸς ἡμᾶς πάλιν ἔνθου (p. 16) does not apply to Constantine, nor yet (4) the statement (p. 26) that he sent ambassadors to Iberia (whether Spanish or Caucasian) to get him a wife.]

It is much to be regretted that the history of Constantine the Great, in two books, written by a young Athenian named Praxagoras at the age of twenty-two, is only known to us by a brief quotation in Photius, cod. 62, p. 20, ed. Bekk. (= F.H.G. iv. p. 2). Photius does not give his date. Müller says he wrote at end of Constantine's reign, or under Constantius, *ut uidetur*, but does not give reasons. In accepting this date as probably right I am guided by the following consideration. Praxagoras (Photius tells us) was a pagan (ἄλλην τὴν θρησκείαν), and yet he praised Constantine very highly, setting him above all his predecessors who held the Imperial dignity. It is extremely improbable that a pagan living in the second half of the fourth century — a contemporary of Julian and Eunapius — or in the fifth, would have adopted this attitude. Hostility to Constantine's memory is a note of Julian and all the pagans who came after him. It seems to me, therefore, that the first half of the fourth century is the only epoch which suits our data respecting Praxagoras.

Julian has been treated so fully in the text that only bibliographical points need be noted here. My references throughout are to the critical text of Hertlein (Gibbon used that of Spanheim, 1696), which includes the extant works, except (1) the treatise *contra Christianos*, which has been ingeniously reconstituted from the citations of Cyril and edited by C. J. Neumann, 1880; and (2) six letters which A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus discovered in a MS. at the μὲν τῆς Θεοτόκου in the island of Chalce near Constantinople. These are published in the *Rheinisches Museum*, 42 (1887), p. 15 *sqq.*, in the *Maurogordateios Bibliothek* and elsewhere [number 1, to his uncle Julian, 2, to the priestess Theodora (cp. Hertl. Ep. 5), 3, to Theodorus, high priest, 4, to Priscus, 5, to Maximin, 6, probably to a priestess]. Three of these [1, 2, 3] are considered of doubtful authenticity by Schwarz in his valuable *Julianstudien*, *Philol.* li. p. 623 *sqq.* (1892), where he tries to discriminate in the extant correspondence of Julian, what is genuine, spurious, and doubtful. He condemns letters 8, 18, 19, 24, 25, 34, 40, 41, 53, 54, 60, 61, 66, 67, 72, 73, 75. Doubts are attached to 28, 32, 57, 68. Letter 27 is mainly genuine, but is tainted by an interpolation, § 9-21. (Schwarz also disproves Cumont's conjecture that a number of the letters are the work of Julian the Sophist, p. 626 *sqq.*) Julian wrote a special work in his Alamannic campaign, not extant now, which was used by Ammianus and Libanius (see below under Ammianus). The *Cohortatio ad Græcos*, which had been falsely ascribed to Justin, has been shown by J. Asmus to be a contemporary polemical tract against Julian (acc. to

J. Dräseke, *Apollinarios von Laodicea*, 1891, p. 85 *sqq.*, identical with the treatise of Apollinaris on Truth, mentioned by Sozomen, v. 18). It was used by Gregory Naz., in his *Invectives*. See *Zeitsch. für wissensch. Theologie*, xxxviii. 115 *sqq.*, 1895. The *Therapeutic* of Theodoret seems to have been directed against Julian's "Rhetor-edict" and his work against the Galilæans; see J. Asmus, *Byz. Zeitsch.* 3, p. 116 *sqq.*
 [Modern works: J. F. Mücke, *Flavius Cl. Julianus*, 1866-8. Rendall, *The Emperor Julian*, 1878. Naville, *Julien l'Apostat et sa philosophie du polythéisme*, 1877. Miss Gardner, *Julian the Philosopher*, 1895. Sievers (in his *Studien*), *Julians Perserkrieg*. Rode, *Geschichte der Reaction Kaiser J. gegen die christliche Kirche*, 1877. Schwarz, *de vita et scriptis Juliani imperatoris*, 1888. F. Cumont, *Sur l'authenticité de quelques lettres de Julian*, 1889. Wiegand, *Die Alamannenschlacht von Strassburg* (in Heft 3 of *Beitr. zur Landes und Volkeskunde von Elsass-Lothr.*, 1887). Koch, *Leyden Dissertation on Julian's Gallic campaigns*, 1890. Reinhardt, *Der Tod des Kaisers Julian*, 1891, and *Der Perserkrieg des K. J.*, 1892. Klimek, *Zur Würdigung der Handschriften und zur Textkritik Julians*, 1888. See also G. Boissier's *La fin du paganisme*; Petit de Julleville's *L'Ecole d'Athènes au iv^e siècle après Jésus Christ*. Others have been mentioned in the notes.]

Of the life and works of Libanius (314-c. 395) a full account will be found in the standard monograph of Sievers, *Das Leben des Libanius* (1868), which is full of valuable research for the general history of the time. Reiske's edition of the *Orations and Declamations* appeared too late (1784-1797, 4 volumes) for Gibbon to use. A new edition both of *Speeches and Letters* (ed. Wolf, 1738) is much needed. 1607 letters are preserved, of which Sievers gives a full dated index (p. 297 *sqq.*). Four hundred letters professing to be Latin translations from originals of Libanius have been proved by R. Förster to be forgeries (*F. Zambeccari und die Briefe des Libanius*, 1876; cp. Sievers, *ib.* Beil. T.T.). The dates of the *Speeches of Libanius*, which concern us in the present volume, are, according to Sievers (p. 203), as follows:—

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Βασιλικός (Ix.) = | c. 348 (349 , Tillemont). |
| (2) Μον?διά ?π? Νικομηδεί? (Ixi.) = | c. 358 (after 24th August). |
| (3) ?ντιοχικός (xi.) = | 360 |
| (4) Προσ?ωνητικ?ς ?ουλιαν? (xiii.) = | July 362 |
| (5) ?π?ρ ?ριστο?άνους (xiv.) = | 362 (intercession for a friend who had been exiled). |
| (6) Μον?διά ?π? τ? ?ν Δά?ν? νε? (Ixi.) = | 362 (after 23rd October). |
| (7) ε?ς ?ουλιαν?ν ?πατον (xii.) = | 1st January 363 |
| (8) πρεσβευτικ?ς πρ?ς ?ουλιανόν (xv.) | } = after March 363 |
| (9) πρ?ς ?ντ. περ? τη?ς βασ. ?ργη?ς (xvi.) } | |
| (10) Μον?διά ?π? ?ουλιαν? (xvii.) = | end July 363 |
| (11) ?πιτά?ιος ?π? ?ουλιαν? (xviii.) = | 368 or 369 |
| (12) ?π?ρ τη?ς ?ουλιανον? τιμωρίας (xxiii.) = | after 378 |

Of the orations of Themistius (a younger contemporary and friend of Libanius) those which concern this volume are the Panegyrics of Constantius: i. 347; ii. 355; iii. (Πρεσβευτικός) and iv., delivered in the senate at Constantinople 357. The subject of i. is ἡλανθρωπία, which Christ (Gr. Litteratur, p. 672) designates as the Schlagwort of Themistius, — a pagan whose tolerance stands out in contrast with the temper of men like Libanius and Eunapius. (Ed. Dindorf, 1832; E. Baret, de Them. sophista et apud imperatores oratore, Paris, 1853.)

The Latin panegyric of Nazarius on Constantine (see below, vol. iii. p. 299) and the speech of thanksgiving of Claudius Mamertinus to Julian are printed in Baehrens' xii. Panegy. Lat., as x. and xi.

Ammianus Marcellinus, born c. 330, belonged to a good Antiochene family (Amm. xix. 8, 6), and was thus a *Græcus* (xxx. 16), though he wrote his history in Latin, which had become a second mother-tongue. His good birth and connections gained him admission to the corps of the *domestici* (see vol. iii. App. 8). His military service probably lasted somewhat more than ten years. We find him at Nisibis in 353 under Ursicinus (xiv. 9, 1). Next year he is in the West; we catch him on the way to Milan (*ib.* 11, 5); and he goes with other *protectores*, *domestici* and *tribuni (scholarum?)* on a mission to Köln (xv. 5, 2, and xviii. 8, 11). But in 357 he returns to the East, to the scene of the Persian war (xvi. 10, 21), and Gibbon notices his escape from Amida. He went through Julian's campaign and probably retired from military service soon after the conclusion of the war by Jovian's treaty (cp. Budinger, Ammianus Marcellinus und die Eigenart seines Geschichtswerkes, 1895).

His *Res Gestæ* in thirty-one books was intended as a continuation of Tacitus, and began with Nerva (xxx. 16). "The first thirteen books, a superficial epitome of 257 years, are now lost; the last eighteen, which contain no more than twenty-five years, still preserve the copious and authentic history of his own times" (Gibbon, ch. xxvi. n. 113). Book xiv. begins with the acts of the Cæsar Gallus in 353, and book xxx. ends with the battle of Hadrianople in 378. The work seems to have been finished early in the last decade of the century, and he won by it a considerable reputation at Rome (cp. Libanius, Epp. ed. Wolf, Ep. to Amm. Marc. pp. 132 *sqq.*). Characteristic are his imitations of Tacitus and Sallust, and his contempt for the scandal-mongering popular history of Marius Maximus. The impartiality of Ammianus is appreciated by Gibbon, and generally recognised. For the Persian wars his account is not only that of a contemporary but of an eye-witness. As to his sources for Julian's German wars, see below. He was a pagan, but was not unjust to Christianity, of which he speaks with respect, and, though an admirer of Julian, shows by a very strong expression his disapprobation of that Emperor's measure which prohibited Christians from teaching (xxii. 10, 7). For his view of Christianity cp. xxi. 16, 18 (quoted by Gibbon) and xxii. 11, 5 (*nihil nisi iustum suadet et lenē*). His remarkable phrase about the founder of Christianity was unknown until A. von Gutschmid brilliantly restored a corrupt passage, xxii. 16, 22: —

Ex his fontibus [sc. Egyptian sources] per sublimia gradiens sermonum amplitudine
Iouis æmulus non uisa Aegypto militauit sapientia gloriosa.

The name of the wise man, thus described, has disappeared from the MSS., and Valesius proposed to substitute *Platon* for *non*. But Gutschmid saw that the reference is to Jesus, and that the abbreviated name *ih̄s* had fallen out accidentally after *his*. Thus *ex his Iesus fontibus* now appears in Gardthausen's text. (*Non u. Aegypto* is not verbally true, according to the account of Matthew, but it is in any case true in spirit.) Ammianus was doubtless thinking of the doctrine of the Logos in the fourth Gospel.

In connection with this passage I would hazard a conjecture. I think that when Ammianus went out of his way to connect Jesus with Egypt, he had in mind a letter of Julian to the Alexandrians (Ep. li.), where the Emperor reproaches them for the prevalence of the Galilean superstition in their cities. The general theme of the letter is: What is Alexandria to Jesus or Jesus to Alexandria? The Ptolemies, he says (p. 557, l. 7, ed. Hertl.), ο?τι το?ς ?ησον? λόγοις η?ξησαν α?τήν ο?δ? τη?? τω?ν ?χθίστων Γαλιλαίων διδασκαλ?? τ?ν ο?κονομ?αν α?τη?? ταύτην ?? [Editor: illegible character]ς νν?ν ?στιν ε?δαίμων ?ξειργάσαντο. Again (p. 558, l. 7), [Editor: illegible character]ν δ? ο?τε ?με??ς ο?τε ο? πατέρες ?μω?ν ?οράκασιν ?ησον?ν ο?εσθε χρη?ναι θε?ν λόγον ?πάρχειν. I suggest that Ammian's words are a criticism on Julian's argument, and that *non uisa Aegypto* was suggested by the sentence last quoted.

The attitude of Ammianus to internal ecclesiastical history has been well brought out by Būdinger (*op. cit.* p. 15 *sqq.*). He declines to enter into the details of Christian controversies; his idea is that the Christians fight among themselves like wild beasts. — His ideas of morality are high and strict; he believes in progress and the enlightenment of his own age, cp. xviii. 7, 7. He has a high ideal of the Imperial authority. He shows towards the Germans a certain bitterness which is never apparent in his treatment of the oriental nations. That he was in a certain measure superstitious, notwithstanding his enlightenment, has been brought out by Būdinger. A proneness to exaggerate signs and portents may partly account for the extraordinary mistake in xx. 3, 1, where it is stated that in the east of the Empire there was an eclipse of the sun visible from dawn to noon, in 360 (the month is not given), — a total eclipse, for the stars were visible. In that year there was a total eclipse, but only visible in Australia; and there was also an eclipse in the afternoon of 28th August, (1) visible in Asia but further east than the east boundary of the Empire, and (2) partial, so that *intermicabant iugiter stellæ* could not apply to it. (Query: Did Ammianus, by a lapse of memory, set down under a wrong year the total eclipse of 4th June, 364 ?)

One sharp criticism of Gibbon on Ammianus (see below, chap. xxii. n. 6) is due, as Mr. Hodgkin has pointed out to me, to a misunderstanding. Ammianus means in the passage in question that the troops were not to reach Persia, but to muster in Italy, at the beginning of spring.

A reference must be made to the friendship of Ammian with his fellowcitizen and fellow-pagan Libanius. Their correspondence seems to have begun (not very cordially perhaps) about 359; Libanius, ep. 141, ed. Wolf; and a very interesting letter (cited above) is extant (date 390-1) in which the rhetor admonishes Ammianus to go on with his historical work. In ep. 232 he refers to ? καλ?ς ?μμιανός. In other letters addressed to Ammianus or Marcellinus there is nothing to identify the writer's correspondent.

For contemporary history Ammianus made use of the writings of Julian, the history of Eutropius and other sources. Much has been written on the subject of his *fontes*: Gardthausen, *Die geographischen Quellen Ammians*, 1873 (and *Coniectanea Ammiana*, 1869); Hertz, *Aulus Gellius und Ammianus Marcellinus* (*Hermes* 8, 1874); Sudhaus, *de ratione quæ intercedat inter Zosimi et Ammiani de bello a Jul. imp. cum Pers. gesto relationes*, 1870; Hugo Michael, *de A. M. studiis Ciceronianis*, 1874, *die verlorenen Bücher des Ammianus M.*, 1880. In *Hermes* 25, 1889, E. von Borries, *Die Quellen zu den Feldzügen Julians des Abtrünnigen gegen die Germanen* (p. 173 *sqq.*), elaborately and ingeniously discusses the question of the relations between the sources for Julian's German campaigns (*viz.*, Ammian, Libanius' Epitaphios, and Zosimus). His results are:—

- (1) Libanius used all Julian's writings including a lost work on the battle of Strassburg. Borries thinks the *ἡπιράτιος* was composed as early as end of 363.
- (2) (Zosimus drew from) Eunapius (who) used a memoir of the physician Oribasius, and various writings (including lost letters) of Julian, but not the work on the campaign against the Alamanni.
- (3) A lost source, x., used all the writings of Julian and the Memoir of Oribasius.
- (4) Ammianus used two sources (as is shown by a number of contradictions and repetitions, and the fact that he sometimes agrees with Libanius, sometimes with Eunapius (Zosimus)). These sources were Julian's monograph on the Alamannic campaign, and x.

Borries shows that there were no "Commentaries" of Julian such as Hecker assumes in "Zur Geschichte des Kaisers Julian," 1876 (cp. *Die Alamannenschlacht bei Strassburg*, in *Jahrb. für class. Philol.*, 1879, p. 59-80).

Gardthausen's edition of Ammianus (1874) is the best.

On Ammian's geographical knowledge see Mommsen, *Hermes* 16, 1881.

Eunapius of Sardis was born about 347, and survived 414 For the facts which are known about his life see Müller, *Frag. Hist. Græc.* iv. p. 7-8. He wrote (1) a continuation of the Chronicle of Dexippus, which ended in 270 and brought it down to the death of Theodosius I., in 395 Then (2) he composed (c. 405) his *Lives of [23] Philosophers and Sophists*, a work which is preserved (ed. Boissonade, in Didot series, 1849), and is valuable as a history of the fourth century renaissance of sophistic. (3) About ten years later, he took up his history again and continued it to 404 , — probably intending to make the death of Arcadius (408) his terminus. Of the history we have only fragments (edited by Müller, *F.H.G.* iv.); but we have further knowledge of it through the fact that it was the main source of Zosimus. It was characterised by all the weaknesses of contemporary rhetoric. For the history of events from Diocletian forward Eunapius' narrative and the Epitome of Victor seem to have been drawn from a common source, but I agree with Mendelssohn in deciding, in opposition to Opitz and Jeep, that this source was not Ammianus. For the

campaigns of Julian, Eunapius used the Memoirs of Oribasius. Like Libanius, he was a firm adherent of the old religion, and an enthusiastic admirer of Julian.

For Magnus of Carrhæ and Eutychianus who wrote accounts of the Persian campaign of Julian, see Müller, F.H.G. iv. 4-6, and Mendelssohn's Preface to Zosimus, p. xxxix. *sqq.*

Zosimus, count and *ex-advocatus fisci*, wrote his history, as L. Mendelssohn (who has recently published an excellent critical edition, 1887) showed, between the years 450 and 501. He is not to be identified with either of his two contemporary namesakes, the grammarian of Ascalon or the sophist of Gaza. That he lived part of his life at Constantinople has been inferred from his accurate description of the city, ii. c. 30 *sqq.* Like Eunapius he was devoted to paganism, and hostile to the Christian Emperors.

Introducing his work by expressing his belief in a guiding providence in history, and appealing to the work of Polybius in which the wonderful career of Rome was unfolded, Zosimus proceeds to give a rapid sketch of Imperial history up to the death of Claudius (i. 1-46), and then begins, with the accession of Aurelian, a fuller narrative, coming down to the siege of Rome by Alaric in 410. The author clearly intended to continue his work to a later date; if the sixth book, of which there are only thirteen chapters, had reached the average length of the first five, it would probably have ended with the death of Honorius. Between books i. and ii. there is a great gap, corresponding to the reigns of Carus, Carinus, and Diocletian. We may conjecture that book ii. began with the accession of Diocletian.

The important question of the sources of Zosimus has been acutely investigated by Mendelssohn (see Preface and Notes to his edition). His results are briefly: (1) For chaps. 1-46, Zosimus used a lost source, in which the account of the Gothic invasions was drawn from the *Scythica* of Dexippus, but the *Chronica* of that writer was not consulted. The hypothesis of an indirect use of the same source will explain the remarkable agreements between Zonaras and Zosimus; and the identification of the source is bound up with the perplexed question of the *fontes* of Zonaras. (2) For the main body of the work Zosimus has chiefly relied on Eunapius, as can be shown from the Eunapian fragments. Besides oracles, and one or two passages of small importance, which he has taken from other sources, Mendelssohn makes it probable that the digression on the secular games at beginning of book ii. was derived from Phlegon's treatise on Roman Feasts; and explains the agreements between Zosimus and Ammianus in the account of Julian's Persian expedition by a common use of Magnus of Carrhæ (cp. Zosimus' own words, iii. 2, 4, where he promises to tell of Julian *μάλιστα ἴσα τοῖς ἄλλοις παραλελεῖσθαι δοκεῖ*—doubtless an allusion to Eunapius). (3) For the last years, 407-410, he uses Olympiodorus, whom he mentions. It is important here to consult Sozomen, who used the same source.

There is an elaborate and admirable "characteristic" of Zosimus as an historian in the *Analekten* to the fourth part of Ranke's *Weltgeschichte* (Abth. 2, p. 264 *sqq.*).

The Consular Fasti of Idatius or, correctly, Hydatius, the Spaniard, consist of three parts: (1) from the first consuls to the foundation of Constantinople, 330, (2) from 330 to 395, (3) from 395 to 468. Parts i. and ii. are an epitome of a chronicle which has been more fully preserved in a Greek form in the *Chronicon Paschale*. (Mommsen has printed the two versions side by side in *Chron. Minora*, i. p. 208 *sqq.*) The second part was written at Constantinople “*quae etiam in chronicis urbanis hereditatem quodammodo Romae veteris sibi vindicavit.*” We must suppose that a copy reached Spain towards the end of the fourth century, and was continued by Idatius concurrently with his continuation of the Chronicle of Jerome, along with which it has come down (see Mommsen, l. c. p. 201. Also C. Frick, in *Byz. Zeitschrift*, vol. i.). In the second part, Idatius seems to have added some notices from the Chronicle of Jerome (composed c. 380).

Of the four Greek ecclesiastical historians who wrote in the first half of the fifth century, the earliest, Philostorgius (born before 365 (?); flor. c. 380-412), is the most interesting, as an Arian. Unluckily his “*Ecclesiastical History*” (which beginning with Constantine ended in 425) is only known by the epitome of it made by Photius in the ninth century; it can be proved that at the beginning of the fourteenth century Nicephorus Xanthopoulos had only this epitome and not the complete work before him. (For the problem as to how far the epitome differs from the original, the study of J. R. Asmus, in *Byz. Zeitsch.* v. 30 *sqq.*, 1895, is suggestive.) The sources of Philostorgius, Socrates, and Sozomen have been elaborately studied by L. Jeep in *Quæstiones Fridericianæ*, 1881, and *Quellenuntersuchungen zu den griechischen Kirchenhistorikern*, 1884. He concludes that Philostorgius made use of Eunapius, and, for the late years of his work, Olympiodorus (see below, vol. iv. Appendix 5).

Some fragments of another Arian historian (name unknown) are preserved (as Mr. Gwatkin showed in his *Studies of Arianism*) in the *Chronicon Paschale*. P. Batiffol has tried to show that this writer was a source of Philostorgius and Theodoret (*Röm. Quartalschrift*, 9, p. 57 *sqq.*, 1895).

Socrates (orthodox; native of Constantinople) brought down his *History* to 439 (cp. vii. 48), in which year (or 440) he can be shown to have completed his work. His sources (referred to by himself) are: Eusebius; Rufinus (cp. ii. 1); Athanasius; three Collections of Letters, of (a) Arius, (b) Constantine against Arius, (c) Alexander of Alexandria (cp. i. 6); Sabinus (Bishop of Thracian Heraclea, and adherent of the heresy of Macedonius), who compiled a Collection of the Acts of the Synods, beginning with Nicæa (*συναγωγὴ τῶν συνοδικῶν*), doubtless filling in the historical connection, and adding comments from his own point of view. Besides these, Socrates certainly made use of the Constantinopolitan Chronicle (see above); and Jeep has tried to show that he used Philostorgius and Olympiodorus. For the relations of Socrates and Rufinus see Gwatkin, *Studies of Arianism*, p. 93 *sqq.*

Sozomen, a contemporary of Socrates and likewise orthodox (probably native of Palestine), proposed to trace the history of the Church from 324 to 439 (where Socrates ended; see Soz.’s dedication); but the work as we have it ends in 425, the last books apparently having been lost (cp. Jeep, *Quellenuntersuch.* p. 140). He used Socrates, but also went to the sources of Socrates; in the last book he abandons

Socrates for Olympiodorus. Cp. Sarrazin, de Theodoro Lectore (in Gelzer u. Götz, Diss. Jenenses).

Theodoret (orthodox) wrote his work (which comes down to 429) between 441 and 449 It has very little value, adding almost nothing to Socrates and Sozomen. The sources have been fully investigated by A. Güldenpenning, Die Kirchengeschichte des Theodoret von Kyrrhos, 1889. Besides Athanasius, Arius, Eustathius of Antioch, he used (according to Güldenpenning) Socrates and Sozomen, and perhaps Philostorgius; also Ephraem Syrus and the Gregories of Nazianzus and Nyssa. The most elaborate work on Theodoret is in Russian, by N. Glubokovski, 1890.

Besides these, two other Ecclesiastical Histories in Greek were composed about the same time, which are now lost and never attained the same popularity, those of (1) Philip Sidetes; cp. Socr. vii. 26-7; and Harnack, Texte u. Untersuch. I. i. 179 *sqq.*; and (2) Hesychius of Jerusalem, cp. Fabricius, Bib. Gr. vii. 548 *sqq.* All six began their histories about the same place, — where Eusebius ended. Cp. Harnack's Sokrates u. Sozomenos, in Encycl. of Herzog u. Plitt; he calls attention to the differences between western and eastern Ecclesiastical historians in motive, aim, and scope.

Modern Works (compare vol. i. Appendix 1). Burckhardt, Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen, 1880 (edition 2). Ranke, Weltgeschichte, iv. O. Seeck, Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt, vol. i. 1895 (which, I regret, appeared too late to be used in the preparation of vol. i. and ii. of this edition. Especially noteworthy is the brilliant chapter on early German society). For early Christian art, F. X. Kraus, Geschichte der christlichen Kunst, vol. i. part i. 1895, where full bibliographical references will be found, and V. Schultze, Archäologie der altchristlichen Kunst, 1895 (cp. vol. iii. Appendix 2). On ecclesiastical matters the reader may profitably consult (besides good ecclesiastical histories, which are numerous, *e.g.*, Neander, Schröckh, Hefele, Milman) articles in the Dictionary of Christian Biography, and in the theological encyclopædia of Herzog and Plitt.

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11.

ORIGIN OF GNOSTICISM — (

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)

Hilgenfeld has developed his view as to the rise of Gnosticism in his highly important work on early heresies, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristenthums*. His position is that Gnosticism was founded (as Irenæus said) by the Samaritan, Simon the Magian, at the beginning of the Apostolic epoch, and thus arose strictly outside Christianity, but yet within its atmosphere. Then it became in a way Christian, and deeply affected Christianity, both by breaking down Jewish Christianity, and by calling forth a combined opposition which led to the formation of a united Catholic church. Hilgenfeld repeats and defends his theory in his *Zeitsch. für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, vol. xxxiii. 1890, p. 1 *sqq.*, against the different view put forward in Harnack's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. i. 1st edition, p. 178 *sqq.* Harnack holds that Gnosticism arose from pre-Christian syncretistic religious theories (a "Religionsmischung") which existed in Syria and especially Samaria, and aimed at a universal religion. The Gnostics he describes as "the theologians of the first century" (p. 163); they took up Christianity at once as a universal religion and opposed it sharply to Judaism and other religions. In Gnosticism, he says (following Overbeck), is represented "die acute Verweltlichung" (Hellenisation) of Christianity, — a result which was only obtained by a gradual process in Catholic Christianity.

Harnack points out well (p. 172) that Gnosticism was accompanied by a number of other sects, only partially related, which on one hand shade off into Hellenism, on the other to ordinary Christianity; *e.g.* Carpocratians and Encratites respectively. He deals at length with the peculiar position of Marcion, p. 197 *sqq.* [Cp. articles on Gnosticism and Marcion, in *Dict. of Christian Biography*.]

Harnack has since made a valuable contribution to the study of Gnosticism by his work "Ueber das gnostische Buch Pistis Sophia" (1891). He shows that this treatise (for which see above, p. 277, n. 33), of which he gives an elaborate exegesis, was earlier than 302, and fixes it to the second half of the third century (p. 94 *sqq.*). He shows that it was written in Egypt, but does not represent Valentinian doctrines (as had been supposed) but rather Ophite, if we use this elastic word to connote a whole group of Syrian gnostic heresies (Ophites, Nicolaites, Sethites, Kainites, &c.). He goes on to develop an attractive theory that the Pistis Sophia is identical with a treatise mentioned by Epiphanius (*De Hær.* xxvi.) under the title of the Small Questions of Mary, as a work that issued from this Gnostic group, and he even tries to establish that it represents in particular the views of the Sethites.

A long and important study on Gnostic works preserved in Coptic (the Books of Jeû: Coptic text and German translation) by C. Schmidt, in Gebhardt u. Harnack, Texte u. Unters., viii. 1 and 2, deserves special mention.

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12.

WORLD-ERAS — (

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)

The system of Africanus (see above, note 10) which established 5500 years between the creation of the world and the incarnation (σάρκωσις: not the nativity, ἡνανθρωπησις) of Christ was adopted by many subsequent chroniclers: *e.g.* by Hippolytus, by Sulpicius Severus, by Eutychius. It was also accepted by Eusebius, but in his chronicle (see above, n. 10) he reckoned events from Abraham, 2017 On this system a.m. 5500 was concurrent with our 2

The other most important eras were:—

(1) The “Byzantine” or “Roman” era (adopted in the *Chronicon Paschale*) = a.m. 5507 (incarnation, 21st March). As this year was identified with 1 we must, in order to reduce a date a.m. to a date, subtract 5508. Thus a.m. 5958 (- 5508) = 450.

(2) The “Antiochene” era (used by John Malalas) = a.m. 5967; but concurrent with 3-2 The rule for reducing a date is: subtract 5970. Thus a.m. 6370 (- 5970) = 400-1. Cp. Gelzer, *Sex. Julius Africanus*, ii. 132.

(3) The “Ecclesiastical” era of Annianus (adopted by George Syncellus and Theophanes) was a.m. 5501. (The year 5500 ended on 24th March, 5501 began 25th March, day of the immaculate conception. The same day of the month (1st Nisan) was the day of the Creation and the Crucifixion.) This year was concurrent with 9 Therefore to reduce a.m. in Theophanes to we must subtract (5501 - 9 =) 5492. Thus a.m. 6000 (- 5492) = 508.

Annianus (finished his work 412) owed much to his elder contemporary Panodorus (c. 395-408) — as has been shown by Unger, cp. Gelzer, *op. cit.* ii. 191 — and both were the main foundations of the chronicle of Syncellus. Panodorus invented a different era which found little favour. He placed Christ’s birth in a.m. 5493. Unger has shown that he miscalculated the length of the Ptolemaic dynasty by a year; his era should be 5494. The eras of Annianus and Panodorus are sometimes known as the Alexandrine.

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13.

EARLY CHURCH INSTITUTIONS — (

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)

There is a considerable German literature on early Christian institutions, from Baur's *Der Ursprung des Episkopats*, 1838, to the present day (of recent works, E. Löning's *Die Gemeindeverfassung des Urchristenthums*, 1889, deserves special mention). Important contributions have been made to the subject in England by Bishop Lightfoot and by Dr. Hatch; the latter in *The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches* (translated into German and edited by Harnack), 1880, doing good service by pointing out resemblances with the organisation of religious communities in the contemporary pagan world. The large literature relating to the Ignatian Letters is also directly concerned with the origin of episcopacy. The subject has been treated from a wider point of view by M. Réville in his *Les origines de l'épiscopat*, vol. i. 1894, a work which throws light on many points. A very brief summary of his results (though they are by no means incontestable) in regard to the episcopate will be appropriate.

He throws aside the *πρωτον ψενδος* of many of his predecessors, "le funeste préjugé de l'unité du christianisme primitif," the idea that in the early church the institutions found in one community existed in all the others. Thus for Paul's time the evidence of the Pauline epistles proves that there were *episcopi* at Philippi, but does not give the slightest reason to assume such in Galatia. The episcopal functions were originally administrative and financial [and liturgical]; and were distinct from the presbyteral functions, though often exercised by presbyters; the deacons were assistants of the *episcopi*. Thus the current view that bishop and presbyter were originally synonymous terms is, according to Réville, erroneous; it is only true in so far as the duties of instruction came to devolve on the bishops as well as the presbyters. (1) In the earliest documents we find a plurality of bishops (and this is still the case at Corinth, when the Epistle of Clement was written); (2) in the last years of the first century a single bishop is becoming the rule in the churches of Asia Minor (cp. *Pastoral Epistles*); (3) the third stage is the monarchical bishop, the ideal which Ignatius extolled in his Letters (which are certainly genuine) as the true remedy for the disorders and divisions of the Eastern Churches, but which (the monarchical, as distinguished from the "uninominal") was not yet (in the second decade of the second century), as his letters prove, a reality. For the organisation of the Christian community in Palestine, consult the articles of Hilgenfeld in his *Zeitschrift*, vol. 33, 1890, p. 98 *sqq.*, and 223 *sqq.*

It may still be maintained that neither M. Réville nor any one else has satisfactorily explained how *bishop* and *presbyter* came to be used interchangeably at any time, as in Acts xx. 28, and the 1st chap. of Titus.

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14.

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS IN THE EMPIRE UNDER DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE — (

Pp. 337, 341

)

Gibbon considers the number of Christians at Rome to have been not more than one-twentieth of the population about the middle of the third century, and he adopts the same proportion for the whole Empire. (This conclusion agrees with that of Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*, iii. 531.) On the other hand, much higher proportions have been computed by more recent writers: Stäudlin, one-half; Matter, one-fifth; La Bastie, one-twelfth; while Chastel gives one-fifteenth for the West, and one-tenth for the East. See Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen*, edition 2, p. 137. H. Richter (whose judgment in such a matter deserves particular consideration) reckons the Christians at one-ninth of the total population (*Weströmisches Reich*, 85, 86). But we have not sufficient data to fix such accurate ratios; we may say that from Decius to Constantine the proportion probably varied from about one-twentieth to one-ninth. Burckhardt, putting aside the question of numbers, finds the main strength of the Christians in their belief in immortality (p. 140).

[1] [We have almost no sources for Philip's reign. Gibbon mentions no events during the years between his accession in 244 and the secular games in 248. An expedition led by Philip himself against the Carpi seems to have been the most important occurrence.]

[2] The expression used by Zosimus [i. 20] and Zonaras [xii. 19] may signify that Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

[3] His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. ix. [4], Victor. in *Cæsarib.* [29] et *Epitom.* [29]), seems to contradict, unless it was merely accidental, his supposed descent from the Decii. Six hundred years had bestowed nobility on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only plebeians of merit, and among the first who shared the consulship with the haughty patricians. *Plebeiæ Deciorum animæ*, &c. Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 254. See the spirited speech of Decius in Livy, x. 9, 10 [7, 8]. [C. Messius Quintus Traianus Decius. The date of his elevation fell in the last days of 248 (Schiller, i. 803).]

[4] [Also named Philip.]

[5] Zosimus, l. i. p. 20 [22]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 624 [19]. Edit. Louvre.

[6] [He conferred the rank of Cæsar on his two sons, Q. Herennius Etruscus Messius Decius and C. Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus.]

[7] See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes: it is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition, published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers. [Jordanes is now recognised as the correct spelling of the Gothic writer whom Gibbon calls Jornandes. See Appendix 1.]

[8] On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. *De Reb. Geticis*, c. 4. [The Scandinavian origin of the Goths was a legend believed by themselves, but there is no historical evidence for it.]

[9] Jornandes, c. 3.

[10] See, in the Prolegomena of Grotius [to *Hist. Gotth., Vand. et Lang.*], some large extracts from Adam of Bremen [98 *sqq.*], and Saxo-Grammaticus [124 *sqq.*]. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flourished about the year 1200.

[11] Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII.* l. iii. When the Austrians desired the aid of the court of Rome against Gustavus Adolphus, they always represented that conqueror as the lineal successor of Alaric. Harte's *History of Gustavus*, vol. ii. p. 123.

[12] See Adam of Bremen in Grotii *Prolegomenis*, p. 104 [105]. The temple of Upsal was destroyed by Ingo King of Sweden, who began his reign in the year 1075, and about fourscore years afterwards a Christian Cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's *History of Sweden in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée*.

[13] Mallet, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Dannemarc*.

[14] Mallet, c. iv. p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people.

[15] This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an Epic Poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia; from whence the prophet was supposed to descend when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden. [See below, chap. lxxi. note 29.]

[16] Tacit. *Germania*, c. 44.

[17] Tacit. *Annal.* ii. 62. If we could yield a firm assent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marseilles, we must allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years before Christ.

[18] Ptolemy, l. ii.

[19] By the German colonies who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The conquest and conversion of Prussia were completed by those adventurers in the xiiith century.

[20] Pliny (Hist. Natur. iv. 14) and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. i. c. 1 [2]) agree in this opinion. They lived in distant ages, and possessed different means of investigating the truth. [Resemblances in proper names point to a close kinship.]

[21] The *Ostro* and *Visi*, the Eastern and Western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and settlements they preserved, with their names, the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The third being a heavy sailer lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards swelled into a nation, received from that circumstance the appellation of Gepidæ or Loiterers. Jornandes, c. 17. [On this division and the early migrations of the Goths, see Appendix 1, 2.]

[22] See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legationum; and with regard to its probable date, see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 346. [Fr. 8, F.H.G., iv. p. 186.]

[23] Omnium harum gentium insigne, rotunda scuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obsequium. Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

[24] Jornandes, c. 13, 14. [Theodoric was not “King of Italy,” as we shall see; the expression is a loose one.]

[25] The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Mascou’s History of the Germans, l. v. A passage in the Augustan History, p. 28 [iv. 14], seems to allude to this great emigration. The Marcomannic war was partly occasioned by the pressure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

[26] D’Anville, Géographie Ancienne, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe.

[27] Tacit. Germania, c. 46. [The Bastarnæ were certainly a Germanic people.]

[28] Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii. c. 43.

[29] The Venedi, the *Slavi*, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the same people. Jornandes, c. 24 [xxiii. 119, ed. Mommsen].

[30] Tacitus most assuredly deserves that title, and even his cautious suspense is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

[31] Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii. p. 379) traversed the Ukraine in his journey from Petersburg to Constantinople. The modern face of the

country is a just representation of the ancient, since, in the hands of the Cossacks, it still remains in a state of nature.

[32] [Ostrogotha is said to have been h s name. Compare the eponymous ancestors of the Greek tribes — Dorus, Æolus, Ion, Achæus, &c.]

[33] In the sixteenth chapter of Jornandes, instead of *secundo* Mæsiam, we may venture to substitute *secundam*, the second Mæsia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (see Hierocles de Provinciis, and Wesseling ad locum, p. 636 Itinerar.). It is surprising how this palpable error of the scribe could escape the judicious correction of Grotius. [*Et secundo Mæsiam populati*. But the Laurentian MS. has *die* before *secundo*, hence the true correction is *de secundo*; see Mommsen's edition, p. 81. The siege of Marcianopolis is described at length in frag. 18 of Dexippus, first published by Müller, F. H. G. iii. p. 675.]

[34] The place is still called Nicop. The little stream [Iandra], on whose banks it stood, falls into the Danube. D'Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 307.

[35] Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Wesseling Itinerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd mistake, ascribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predecessor of Decius.

[36] Ammian. xxxi. 5. [A fragment of Dexippus, first edited by Müller (F. H. G. iii. p. 678, fr. 20), gives a long description of an ineffectual siege of Philippopolis by the Goths. Müller concludes that there were two sieges: the first unsuccessful, before the defeat and death of Decius; the second successful, after that disaster. This is supported by the words of Ammianus, xxxi. 5.]

[37] Aurel. Victor [Cæsar.], c. 29. [Dexippus, frags. 19, 20; Zos. i. 19.]

[38] *Victoriæ Carpicæ*, on some medals of Decius, insinuate these advantages.

[39] Claudius (who afterwards reigned with so much glory) was posted in the pass of Thermopylæ with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and 160 light horse, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well-armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officers in the Augustan History, p. 200 [xxv. 16].

[40] Jornandes, c. 16-18. Zosimus, l. i. p. 22 [23]. In the general account of this war, it is easy to discover the opposite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In carelessness alone they are alike.

[41] Montesquieu, Grandeur et Décadence des Romains, c. 8. He illustrates the nature and use of the censorship with his usual ingenuity and with uncommon precision. [It is hard to suppose that Decius was so unsophisticated as really to imagine that the revival of the censorship would be likely to promote a revival of morals. It has been conjectured that the measure was a concession to the senate.]

[42] Vespasian and Titus were the last censors (Pliny, Hist. Natur. vii. 49. Censorinus de Die Natali). The modesty of Trajan refused an honour which he deserved, and his

example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60. [The author apparently thought that Domitian held only the *censoria potestas*. At first indeed he was content with this; it was conferred on him in 84 or 85 ; but soon afterwards he assumed the censorship for life. His object was to control the senate. Martial (vi. 4) addresses him as *Censor maxime*.]

[43] Yet in spite of this exemption Pompey appeared before that tribunal, during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular and honourable. Plutarch in Pomp. p. 630 [22].

[44] See the original speech in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174 [xxii. 6 (2)].

[45] This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii. p. 625 [20].

[46] Hist. August. p. 174 [ib.]. The emperor's reply is omitted.

[47] Such as the attempts of Augustus towards a reformation of manners. Tacit. Annal. iii. 24.

[48] Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii. 598. As Zosimus and some of his followers mistake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia. [Forum Trebonii or Abrittus is in the province of Scythia, which is the modern Dobrudža, but the site has not been discovered.]

[49] Aurelius Victor allows two distinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jornandes. [And so Dexippus, fr. 16.]

[50] I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (Annal. i. 64) the picture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German tribe.

[51] Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. i. p. 22 [23]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 627 [20]. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 29, 5, and Victor. epit. 29].

[52] The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred and fifty-one, since the new princes took possession of the consulship on the ensuing calends of January. [Tillemont has argued for end of November 251, and is followed by Hodgkin, i. p. 56, but Alexandrian coins prove that it must be earlier than August 29, 251. See Schiller, i. 807.]

[53] Hist. August. p. 223 [xxvi. 42] gives them a very honourable place among the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus and Diocletian.

[54] [C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, governor of the two Mœsias.]

[55] Hæc, ubi Patres comperere . . . decernunt. Victor in Cæsaribus [30].

[56] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [21. Zosimus, i. 24].

[57] A *Sella*, a *Toga*, and a golden *Patera* of five pounds' weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt (Livy, xxvii. 4). *Quina millia Æris*, a weight of copper in value about eighteen pounds sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Livy, xxxi. 9).

[58] See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the *Excerpta Legationum*, p. 25. Edit. Louvre.

[59] For the plague see Jornandes, c. 19, and Victor in *Cæsaribus* [30, 2. John of Antioch, frag. 151].

[60] These improbable accusations are alleged by Zosimus, l. i. p. 23, 24 [24].

[61] Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at least observed the peace which his victorious countrymen had sworn to Gallus.

[62] [M. Æmilius Æmilianus.]

[63] Zosimus, l. i. p. 25, 26 [28].

[64] Victor in *Cæsaribus* [31, 2, states that Gallus and his son were slain at Interamna].

[65] [Veldumnianus Volusianus became Cæsar on the accession of his father, and Augustus on the death of Hostilianus (before end of 251).]

[66] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [22].

[67] Banduri *Numismata*, p. 94.

[68] Eutropius, l. ix. c. 6, says *tertio mense*. Eusebius omits this emperor. [Valerian and Gallienus were emperors before 22nd October 253; see Wilmanns, 1472. Alexandrian coins, which are so useful in determining limits, prove that Æmilianus must have overthrown Gallus before 29th August 253, and that he was not slain himself earlier than 30th August 253. Aurelius Victor and Zonaras agree that the reign of Æmilianus lasted not quite four months; Jordanes, like Eutropius, says *tertio mense*. If, then, we place the death of Æmilianus early in September, we must place that of Gallus late in May or early in June. See Schiller, i. 810.]

[69] Zosimus, l. i. p. 28 [29]. Eutropius and Victor station Valerian's army in Rhætia [where they proclaimed him emperor].

[70] He was about seventy at the time of his accession, or, as it is more probable, of his death. *Hist. August.* p. 173 [xxii. 5 (1)]. Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iii. p. 893, note 1.

[71] *Inimicus Tyrannorum*, *Hist. August.* p. 173 [ib.]. In the glorious struggle of the senate against Maximin, Valerian acted a very spirited part. *Hist. August.* p. 156 [xx. 9].

[72] According to the distinction of Victor, he seems to have received the title of *Imperator* from the army, and that of Augustus from the senate.

[73] From Victor and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 710) very justly infers that Gallienus was associated to the empire about the month of August of the year 253. [This date is too early. Æmilianus was not slain till after August 29. We can only say that Gallienus was associated as Augustus before October 22.]

[74] [P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus. The son of Gallienus was also associated in the empire — P. Licinius Cornelius Valerianus.]

[75] Various systems have been formed to explain difficult passages in Gregory of Tours, l. ii. c. 9.

[76] The Geographer of Ravenna, i. 11, by mentioning *Mauringania* on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient seat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious system of Leibnitz.

[77] See Cluver. *Germania Antiqua*, l. iii. c. 20. M. Freret, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xviii. [The Franks were the descendants of the Sugambri and Chamavi and in the third century had been increased by the Chatti. The Amsivarii, Chattuarii, and some of the Bructeri also joined their “league.”]

[78] Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 710, 1181.

[79] Plin. *Hist. Natur.* xvi. 1. The panegyrist frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks.

[80] Tacit. *Germania*, c. 30, 37.

[81] In a subsequent period most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. *Germ. Antiq.* l. iii.

[82] Simler de *Republicâ Helvet*, cum notis Fuselin.

[83] Zosimus, l. i. p. 27 [30].

[84] [Zonaras, xii. 14.]

[85] [M. Cassianus Latinus Postumus.]

[86] [He was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in 258, shortly after Gallienus had hastened from the Rhine frontier to the defence of the Danube. The emperor's elder son and colleague, Valerian the Younger, who had been left at Köln to represent him, was slain by the rebels in 259. The reign of Postumus, one of the “thirty tyrants,” lasted till 268. Gibbon omits to mention the elder son of Gallienus, Valerian. Saloninus was the younger, but he was called Valerian after his brother's death.]

[87] M. de Brequigny (in the *Mémoires de l'Académie*, tom. xxx.) has given us a very curious life of Posthumus. A series of the Augustan History from Medals and Inscriptions has been more than once planned, and is still much wanted. [See Eckhel, vii. 439.]

[88] [256-268]

[89] Aurel. Victor [Cæs.], c. 33 [§ 3]. Instead of *Pæne direpto*, both the sense and the expression require *deleto*, though, indeed, for different reasons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the best and of the worst writers.

[90] In the time of Ausonius (the end of the fourth century) Ilerda or Lerida was in a very ruinous state (Auson. Epist. xxv. 58), which probably was the consequence of this invasion. [See Orosius, vii. 22, 8.]

[91] Valesius is therefore mistaken in supposing that the Franks had invaded Spain by sea.

[92] Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 33]. Eutrop. ix. 6.

[93] Tacit. Germania, 38 [39].

[94] Cluver. German. Antiq. iii. 25.

[95] Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, sic Suevorum ingenui a servis separantur. A proud separation!

[96] Cæsar in Bello Gallico, iv. 7.

[97] Victor in Caracal. [Cæs. 21]. Dion Cassius, lxxvii. p. 1350 [13]. [The invaders were defeated by Caracalla, 213]

[98] This etymology (far different from those which amuse the fancy of the learned) is preserved by Asinius Quadratus, an original historian, quoted by Agathias, i. c. 5. [Another derivation is Alah-mannen, "men of the sanctuary," referring to the wood of the Semnonen. The identification of the Alamanni with the Suevians is very uncertain.]

[99] The Suevi engaged Cæsar in this manner and the manœuvre deserved the approbation of the conqueror (in Bello Gallico, i. 48).

[100] Hist. August. p. 215, 216 [xxvi. 18, 21]. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legationum, p. 8 [p. 11, ed. Bonn; F.H.G. iii. p. 682]. Hieronym. Chron. Orosius, vii. 22. [The first campaigns of Gallienus against the Alamanni were in 256 and 257. The invasion of Italy took place 259-260. Simultaneously another band invaded Gaul, and was subdued near Arelate; Gregory of Tours, i. 32.]

[101] Zosimus, l. i. p. 34 [37].

[a][The original text has *public*. I have ventured to amend. Ed.]

[102] Aurel. Victor in Gallieno et Probo [Cæsar. 34, 37]. His complaints breathe an uncommon spirit of freedom.

[103] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 631 [24. This victory was probably gained in the same invasion which has been already described; Gallienus fell upon them as they were retreating. We need not assume two invasions, or doubt the statement of Zonaras.]

[104] One of the Victors calls him King of the Marcomanni, the other, of the Germans.

[105] See Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii. p. 398, &c. [She was only a concubine and must not be confounded with the empress Salonina.]

[106] See the lives of Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Augustan History. [Dacia was lost to the Goths about 255 or 256. The event is not recorded, but it is inferred from the fact that no coins or inscriptions in the province date from a later year than 255; see Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, v. 220, Hodgkin, i. 57.]

[107] It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 598.

[108] M. de Peyssonal, who had been French consul at Caffa, in his Observations sur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

[109] Euripides in Iphigenia in Taurid.

[110] Strabo, l. vii. p. 309. The first kings of Bosphorus were the allies of Athens.

[111] Appian in Mithridat. [67].

[112] It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Orosius, vi. 21. Eutropius, vii. 9. The Romans once advanced within three days' march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii. 17.

[113] See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the sincerity and the virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation against the kings of Bosphorus.

[114] Zosimus, l. i. p. 28 [31. Coins prove that the lineal succession did not cease before 267 at the earliest.]

[115] Strabo, l. xi. [p. 495]. Tacit. Hist. iii. 47. They were called *Camaræ*.

[116] See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the xvith letter of Tournefort.

[117] Arrian places the frontier garrison at Dioscurias, or Sebastopolis, forty-four miles to the east of Pityus. The garrison of Phasis consisted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine. [For the Gothic invasions see Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, i. ch. 1.]

[118] Zosimus, l. i. p. 30. [256]

[119] Arrian (in *Periplo Maris Euxin.* p. 130 [27]) calls the distance 2610 stadia.

[120] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, l. iv. p. 348. Edit. Hutchinson [c. 8].

[121] Arrian, p. 129 [26]. The general observation is Tournefort's.

[122] See an epistle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, quoted by Mascou, v. 37.

[123] Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33 [35].

[124] *Itiner. Hierosolym*, p. 572. Wesseling.

[125] Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33 [35].

[126] He besieged the place with 400 galleys, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in *Lucul.* [9]. Appian in *Mithridat.* [72]. Cicero *pro Lege Maniliâ*, c. 8.

[127] Strabo, l. xii. p. 573.

[128] Pocock's *Descriptions of the East*, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

[129] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [35].

[130] Syncellus [i. p. 717, ed. Bonn] tells an unintelligible story of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus*.

[131] *Voyages de Chardin*, tom. i. p. 45. He sailed with the Turks from Constantinople to Caffa.

[132] Syncellus (p. 382) [ib.] speaks of this expedition as undertaken by the Heruli.

[133] Strabo, l. xi. p. 495.

[134] [Gibbon omits to mention that the Goths sustained a severe naval defeat, before they entered the Propontis, at the hands of Venerianus. *Hist. August.* xxiii. 13.]

[135] Plin. *Hist. Natur.* iii. 7 [error for iv. 7].

[136] [The renewed wall was known as the wall of Valerian. See Zosimus, i. 29. A wall was built at the same time across the Isthmus. For this invasion of Greece, see Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Athen im Mittelalter*, i. 16 *sqq.*]

[137] [The monuments of Athens seem on this occasion to have been spared.]

[138] *Hist. August.* p. 181 [xxiii. 13]. Victor [Cæsar.], c. 33. Orosius, vii. 42. Zosimus, l. i. p. 35 [39]. Zonaras, l. xii. 635 [26]. Syncellus, p. 382 [i. p. 717, ed.

Bonn]. It is not without some attention that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can still discover some traces of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits. [Frag. 21. An epigram on Dexippus as a scholar, not as a deliverer, has been preserved. C.I.A. iii. 1, No. 716.]

[139] [Gibbon has omitted to mention the attack of the Goths on Thessalonica, which almost proved fatal to that city. This incident spread terror throughout the Illyric peninsula, and thoroughly frightened the government. It was probably the immediate cause of the restoration of the walls of Athens and the other fortifications in Greece. See Zosimus, i. 29, and perhaps Eusebius in Müller, F.H.G. v. 1, 21.]

[140] Syncellus, p. 382 [ib.]. This body of Heruli was for a long time faithful and famous.

[141] Claudius, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propriety and acted with spirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame. Hist. August. p. 181 [xxiii. 14].

[142] Jornandes, c. 20.

[143] Zosimus, and the Greeks (as the author of the Philopatris [see below, p. 131, note 81]), give the name of Scythians to those whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, constantly represent as Goths.

[144] Hist. August. p. 178 [xxiii. 6]. Jornandes, c. 20. [The chronology is extremely doubtful. It seems more probable that Ephesus suffered in an earlier invasion. See Hodgkin, i. 62.]

[145] Strabo, l. xiv. p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i. c. 1, præfat. l. vii. Tacit. Annal. iii. 71. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvi. 14.

[146] The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is a very little short of nine English inches. See Greave's Miscellanies, vol. i. p. 233, On the Roman foot.

[147] The policy however of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which by successive privileges had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, l. xiv. p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii. 60, &c.

[148] They offered no sacrifices to the Grecians' gods. See Epistol. Gregor. Thaumaturg.

[149] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 635 [26]. Such an anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable Essay on Pedantry, l. i. c. 24. [Compare Anon. Continuation of Dion Cassius, in Müller, F.H.G. iv. p. 196.]

[150] Moses Chorenensis, l. ii. c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 628 [21]. The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant. [The succession of Tiridates was resisted by his uncle Artavasdes, who then ruled in Armenia as vassal of Sapor.]

[151] Hist. August. p. 191 [xxiv. 11]. As Macrianus was an enemy to the Christians, they charged him with being a magician. [There seems no reason to impute any fault to Macrianus in this disaster. He appears to have been an able officer but unfortunately an invalid. For the defeat of Valerian and the chronology, see Appendix 3.]

[152] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [36].

[153] Hist. August. p. 174 [xxii. 32].

[154] Victor in Cæsar. [32]. Eutropius, ix. 7.

[155] Zosimus, l. i. p. 33 [36]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630 [23]. Peter Patricius in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.

[156] Hist. August. p. 185 [xxiv. 1]. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer. [But see Appendix 3.]

[157] The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii. 5.

[158] Zosimus, l. i. p. 35 [36].

[159] John Malala, tom. i. p. 391 [p. 296, ed. Bonn]. He corrupts this probable event by some fabulous circumstances.

[160] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 630 [23]. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Crowds of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food.

[161] Zosimus, l. i. p. 25 [28], asserts that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to conquest, might have remained master of Asia.

[162] Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29 [frag. 10, Müller, F.H.G. iv. Septimius Odænathus had been made a *consularis* by Valerian before April 258. See Waddington-Le Bas, iii. 2602].

[163] Syrorum agrestium manû. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus, Victor, the Augustan History (p. 192 [xxiv. 14]) and several inscriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra. [Palmyra had been made a *colonia* by Severus. As a great commercial town, its policy was to preserve neutrality between the powers of the East and the West, and, while the Parthian realm lasted, this was feasible. But the ambition of the new Persian monarchy forced Palmyra to take a decided step, and either attach itself to the empire or submit to Sapor. This step was taken by Odænathus.]

[164] He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. l. ii. c. 5) and John Malala (tom. i. p. 391 [392; p. 297, ed. Bonn]) style him Prince of the Saracens.

[165] Peter Patricius, p. 25 [frag. 11. See also Zonaras, xii. 23; Zosimus, i. 39; Syncellus, i. 716 (ed. Bonn)].

[166] The Pagan writers lament, the Christian insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of Eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See Bibliothèque Orientale.

[167] One of these epistles is from Artavasdes, king of Armenia: since Armenia was then a province to Persia, the king, the kingdom, and the epistle must be fictitious.

[168] See his life in the Augustan History.

[169] There is still extant a very pretty Epithalamium, composed by Gallienus, for the nuptials of his nephews [Hist. August. xxiii. 11]: —

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter sudate medullis
Omnibus, inter vos; non murmura vestra columbæ,
Brachia non hederæ, non vincant oscula conchæ.

[170] He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Campania to try the experiment of realising Plato's Republic. See the Life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Græc. l. iv.

[171] A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former *Gallienæ Augustæ*, the latter *Ubique Pax* [Eckhel, vii. 413]. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe satire on that effeminate prince. But, as the use of irony may seem unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. August. p. 198) an ingenious and natural solution. Galliena was first cousin to the emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, she deserved the title of Augusta. [Recent authorities however accept the explanation of Spanheim.] On a medal in the French king's collection, we read a similar inscription of *Faustina Augusta* round the head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps, the occasion of some momentary calm. See *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* Janvier, 1700, p. 21-34.

[172] This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy, and the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus. [But see vol. i. Appendix 1.]

[173] Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the number.

[174] The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there *was* a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others. [Hist. Aug. xxiv. 29, 1 is here referred to. See Appendix 4.]

[175] Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently.

[176] See the speech of Marius, in the Augustan History, p. 187 [xxiv. 7]. The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollio to imitate Sallust.

[177] Vos O Pompilius sanguis! is Horace's address to the Pisos. See Art. Poet. v. 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

[178] Tacit. Annal. xv. 48, Hist. i. 15. In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13). A second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæsar by Galba.

[179] Hist. August. p. 195 [xxiv. 20]. The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

[180] Hist. August. p. 196 [xxiv. 22].

[181] The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 180 [xxiii. 12, 1. The statement is certainly erroneous. See Appendix 5.]

[182] Gallienus had given the titles of Cæsar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire: several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces of the emperor formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii. and M. de Brequigny in the Mémoires de l'Académie, tom. xxxii. p. 262.

[183] Hist. August. p. 188 [xxiv. 8].

[184] Regillianus had some bands of Roxolani in his service; Posthumus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain.

[185] The Augustan History, p. 177 [xxiii. 4], calls it *servile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. l. xxxiv.

[186] Plin. Hist. Natur. v. 10.

[187] Diodor. Sicul. l. xvii. p. 590. Edit. Wesseling [52].

[a] [The original text omits, presumably by accident, after *again*. Ed.]

[188] See a very curious letter of Hadrian in the Augustan History, p. 245 [xxix. 8. Cp. Student's Roman Empire, p. 520.]

[189] Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. 1.

[190] Hist. August. p. 195. This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsman about a pair of shoes. [Compare the description of Mommsen, Röm. Gesch. v. 582 *sqq.*]

[191] Dionysius apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vol. vii. p. [*leg. c.*] 21. Ammian. xxii. 16.

[192] Scaliger Animadver. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamy, in the Mém. de l'Académie, tom. ix.

[193] Strabo, l. xii. p. 569.

[194] Hist. August. p. 197 [xxiv. 25].

[195] See Cellarius, Geog. Antiq. tom. ii. p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.

[196] Hist. August. p. 177 [xxiii. 5].

[197] Ibid. [ib.]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 24 [26]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 623 [21]. Euseb. Chronicon. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. [33]. Eutropius, ix. 5. Orosius, vii. 21. [One of the most significant proofs of the distress of the empire in the reign of Gallienus is the bankruptcy of the government, which resorted to the old expedient of shameless depreciation of the coinage. At the end of his reign the argenteus was merely a coin of base metal washed over with silver. See Finlay, History of Greece, ed. Tozer, vol. 1. Appendix ii.]

[198] Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii. 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who in the time of those troubles was bishop of Alexandria.

[199] In a great number of parishes 11,000 persons were found between fourteen and eighty; 5365 between forty and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. ii. p. 590.

[1] *Pons Aureoli*, thirteen miles from Bergamo, and thirty-two from Milan. See Cluver. Italia Antiq. tom. 1, p. 245. Near this place, in the year 1703, the obstinate battle of Cassano was fought between the French and Austrians. The excellent relation of the Chevalier de Folard, who was present, gives a very distinct idea of the ground. See Polybe de Folard, tom. 3, p. 223-248.

[2] [Cecropius is the name, Hist. Aug. xxiii. 14.]

[3] On the death of Gallienus, see Trebellius Pollio in Hist. August. p. 181 [xxiii. 14]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 37 [40]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 634 [25]. Eutropius, ix. 11. Aurelius Victor in Epitom. [33]. Victor in Cæsar. [33]. I have compared and blended them all, but have chiefly followed Aurelius Victor, who seems to have had the best memoirs. [Cecropius slew him according to Hist. Aug.; but another story named Heraclian, John of Antioch 152, 3 (Müller, F.H.G. iv.), and Zonaras, xii. 25. Zosimus, i. 40 is probably right in saying that Heraclian instigated the Dalmatian officer to strike the

blow. There is a further confusion in John of Antioch, who makes Heraclian the Dalmatian captain.]

[4] Some supposed him, oddly enough, to be a bastard of the younger Gordian. Others took advantage of the province of Dardania, to deduce his origin from Dardanus and the ancient kings of Troy. [M. Aurelius Claudius was his name.]

[5] *Notoria*, a periodical and official despatch which the emperors received from the *frumentarii* or agents dispersed through the provinces. Of these we may speak hereafter.

[6] Hist. August. p. 208 [xxv. 17]. Gallienus describes the plate, vestments, &c., like a man who loved and understood those splendid trifles.

[7] Julian (Orat. i. p. 6) affirms that Claudius acquired the empire in a just and even holy manner. But we may distrust the partiality of a kinsman.

[8] Hist. August. p. 203 [ib. 5]. There are some trifling differences concerning the circumstances of the last defeat and death of Aureolus. [The inscription in Boeckh (C.I.G. 6761) seems to have no independent value, but to have been composed on the basis of the account of Zosimus. See Schiller, i. 846.]

[9] Aurelius Victor in Galien. The people loudly prayed for the damnation of Gallienus. The senate decreed that his relations and servants should be thrown down headlong from the Gemonian stairs. An obnoxious officer of the revenue had his eyes torn out whilst under examination.

[10] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 137 [*leg.* 635; c. 26].

[11] Zonaras on this occasion mentions Posthumus; but the registers of the senate (Hist. August. p. 203 [ib. 4]) prove that Tetricus was already emperor of the western provinces.

[12] [The author does not mention the coalition of Grethungi, Tervingi, Alamanni, and other nations, which Claudius had to face in 268. The Alamanni crossed the Brenner and were defeated by Claudius near Lake Garda. Aurelius Victor, epit. 34, 2; Eckhel, vii. 474; C.I.L. iii. 3521.]

[13] The Augustan History mentions the smaller, Zonaras [Zosimus, i. 42] the larger, number; the lively fancy of Montesquieu induced him to prefer the latter. [For these invasions see Hodgkin, i. c. 1.]

[14] Trebell. Pollio in Hist. August. p. 204 [xxv. 7].

[15] Hist. August. in Claud. Aurelian. et Prob. Zosimus, l. i. p. 38-42 [c. 42]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638 [c. 26]. Aurel. Victor in Epitom. Victor Junior in Cæsar. Eutrop. ix. 11. Euseb. in Chron. [The skill with which Claudius planned the campaign is well brought out in the account of Schiller, i. 848.]

[16] According to Zonaras (l. xii. p. 636 [ib.]) Claudius, before his death, invested him with the purple; but this singular fact is rather contradicted than confirmed by other writers. [Zonaras says that Claudius recommended Aurelian to his officers, and that, *according to some*, he even proclaimed him emperor on the spot.]

[17] [L. Domitius Aurelianus.]

[18] See the life of Claudius by Pollio, and the orations of Mamertinus, Eumenius, and Julian. See likewise the Cæsars of Julian, p. 313. In Julian it was not adulation, but superstition and vanity.

[19] Zosimus, l. i. p. 42 [47]. Pollio (Hist. August. p. 206 [xxv. 12, 5]) allows him virtues, and says that like Pertinax he was killed by licentious soldiers. According to Dexippus [quoted by Pollio, Hist. Aug., but what he said was (not *occisum* but) *mortuum ?ποθανε??ν nec tamen addit morbo*, thus leaving it doubtful] he died of a disease. [M. Aurelius Claudius Quintillus (this is the form of his name on coins, and in best MSS. of Hist. Aug.; Eckhel, vii. 478). It is to be noted that the Senate favoured his claims. He had been stationed to guard the Julian Alps and Aquileia, to cover the rear of Claudius in his Gothic war. He seems to have gained some victory, Cohen, 52.]

[20] [This seems to be an invention of Vopiscus. Such an office did not exist.]

[21] Theoclius [Cæsareanorum temporum scriptor] (as quoted in the Augustan History, p. 211 [xxvi. 6]) affirms that in one day he killed, with his own hand, forty-eight Sarmatians, and in several subsequent engagements nine hundred and fifty. This heroic valour was admired by the soldiers, and celebrated in their rude songs, the burthen of which was *mille mille mille occidit*.

[22] Acholius (ap. Hist. August. p. 213 [xxvi. 12]) describes the ceremony of the adoption, as it was performed at Byzantium, in the presence of the emperor and his great officers. [Grave doubts are felt as to the truth of these statements which Vopiscus professes to quote from Acholius. (1) Aurelian was consul for the first time in 271, according to the consular Fasti (see Klein, *Fasti consulares*, 110), and therefore cannot have been consul in 258. (2) Had he been adopted by Ulpius Crinitus, he must have assumed the name of his adopted father; but he never did so. (3) Some of the persons present at the ceremony held offices of whose existence before Diocletian's time there is no other trace. See Rothkegel, *Die Regierung des Kaisers Gallienus*, p. 10.]

[23] Hist. August. p. 211 [xxvi. 7]. This laconic epistle is truly the work of a soldier; it abounds with military phrases and words, some of which cannot be understood without difficulty. *Ferramenta samiata* is well explained by Salmasius. The former of the words means all weapons of offence, and is contrasted with *Arma*, defensive armour. The latter signifies keen and well sharpened. [He is called *restitutor exerciti* on coins, Cohen, 175, as well as by the more ambitious title *restitutor orbis*, Cohen, 164 *sqq.*]

[24] Zosim. l. 1, p. 45 [48].

[25] Dexippus (ap. Excerpta Legat. p. 12 [p. 19, ed. Bonn]) relates the whole transaction under the name of Vandals. Aurelian married one of the Gothic ladies to his general Bonosus, who was able to drink with the Goths and discover their secrets. Hist. August. p. 247 [xxix. 14, 15]. [The author is mistaken in applying the account of Dexippus to the Goths: the negotiations were with the Vandals.]

[26] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39]. Eutrop. ix. 15. Sextus Rufus, c. 9. Lactantius de mortibus Persecutorum, c. 9. [But see above, chap. x. note 106.]

[27] [*Dacia felix* on coins, Eckhel, vii. 481. Unfortunately this new province, unlike the old, had no strategic importance.]

[28] The Walachians still preserve many traces of the Latin language, and have boasted in every age of their Roman descent. They are surrounded by, but not mixed with, the barbarians. See a Memoir of M. d'Anville, on ancient Dacia, in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx. [The Roumanian boast as to their descent was challenged about twenty years ago by Roesler, whose book led to a notable controversy, which will claim our attention at a later stage.]

[29] See the first chapter of Jornandes. The Vandals however (c. 22) maintained a short independence between the rivers Marisia and Crissia (Maros and Keres) which fell into the Theiss.

[30] Dexippus, p. 7-12 [fr. 25]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 43 [49]. Vopiscus in Aurelian. in Hist. August. [c. 18]. However these historians differ in names (Alemanni, Juthungi, and Marcomanni) it is evident that they mean the same people, and the same war; but it requires some care to conciliate and explain them. [Aurelius Victor, 35, 2, says Alamanni. But the whole narrative in the text is vitiated by the author's deliberate confusion of the Juthungi, Alamanni, and Vandals.]

[31] Cantoclarus, with his usual accuracy, chooses to translate three hundred thousand; his version is equally repugnant to sense and to grammar.

[32] We may remark, as an instance of bad taste, that Dexippus applies to the light infantry of the Alemanni the technical terms proper only to the Grecian Phalanx.

[33] In Dexippus we at present read Rhodanus; M. de Valois very judiciously alters the word to Eridanus. [This narrative of Dexippus refers to the Juthungi, not to the Alamanni.]

[34] [Really the Juthungi, Dexippus, p. 25. 270. A treaty was also made with the Vandals, ib.]

[35] The emperor Claudius was certainly of the number; but we are ignorant how far this mark of respect was extended; if to Cæsar and Augustus, it must have produced a very awful spectacle; a long line of the masters of the world.

[36] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 210 [xxvi. 6].

[37] Dexippus gives them a subtle and prolix oration, worthy of a Grecian Sophist.

[38] Hist. August. p. 215 [xxvi. 18, where the invaders are called Marcomanni. The second invasion of the Juthungi (Dexippus, *ib. ad fin.*) may have been connected with this Alamannic invasion.]

[39] Dexippus, p. 12 [fr. 25 *ad fin.*].

[40] Victor Junior in Aurelian. [Epit. 35].

[41] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216 [xxvi. 21, 1].

[42] The little river or rather torrent of Metaurus, near Fano, has been immortalised, by finding such an historian as Livy, and such a poet as Horace.

[43] It is recorded by an inscription found at Pezaro. See Gruter. cclxxvi. 3 [Orelli, 1031].

[44] One should imagine, he said, that you were assembled in a Christian church, not in the temple of all the gods.

[45] Vopiscus in Hist. Aug. p. 215, 216 [xxvi. 19 and 20] gives a long account of these ceremonies, from the Registers of the senate.

[46] Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. To confirm our idea, we may observe that for a long time Mount Cælius was a grove of oaks, and Mount Viminal was overrun with osiers; that in the fourth century, the Aventine was a vacant and solitary retirement; that, till the time of Augustus, the Esquiline was an unwholesome burying ground; and that the numerous inequalities remarked by the ancients in the Quirinal sufficiently prove that it was not covered with buildings. Of the seven hills, the Capitoline and Palatine only, with the adjacent valleys, were the primitive habitations of the Roman people. But this subject would require a dissertation. [It is now generally admitted that Pliny must have meant the circumference of the city as divided by Augustus into 14 regions.]

[47] *Expatriantia tecta multas addidere urbes*, is the expression of Pliny.

[48] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39, 2]. Both Lipsius and Isaac Vossius have eagerly embraced this measure.

[49] See Nardini, *Roma Antica*, l. i. c. 8. [Compare Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom in Alterthum*, i. 340 *sqq.*]

[50] Tacit. Hist. iv. 23.

[51] For Aurelian's walls, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216, 222 [xxvi. 21; 39]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 43 [49]. Eutropius, ix. 15. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian., Victor Junior in Aurelian., Euseb. Hieronym. et Idatius in Chronic.

[52] His competitor was Lollianus, or Ælianus, if indeed these names mean the same person. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1177. [Lælianus. See Appendix 4.]

[53] The character of this prince by Julius Aterianus (ap. Hist. August. p. 187 [xxiv. 6]) is worth transcribing, as it seems fair and impartial. Victorino qui post Junium Posthumum Gallias [G. post J. p.] rexit neminem existimo [æstimo] præferendum: non in virtute Trajanum; non Antoninum in clementia; non in gravitate Nervam; non in gubernando ærario Vespasianum; non in censura totius vitæ ac severitate militari Pertinacem vel Severum. Sed omnia hæc libido, et cupiditas voluptatis mulierariæ [mul. vol.] sic perdidit, ut nemo audeat virtutes ejus in literas mittere quem constat omnium judicio meruisse puniri. [The right readings are inserted in brackets.]

[54] He ravished the wife of Attitianus, an *actuary*, or army agent. Hist. August. p. 186 [ib.]. Aurel. Victor in Aurelian.

[55] Pollio assigns her an article among the thirty tyrants. Hist. Aug. p. 200 [xxvi. 31. As for Marius, see Appendix 4.]

[56] [Gaius Pius (?) Esuvius Tetricus. He made his son his colleague, compare Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*, ii. 1106, and Burdigala (owing to his Aquitanian connections) his capital.]

[57] Pollio in Hist. August. p. 196. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220 [xxiv. 24; xxvi. 32]. The two Victors, in the lives of Gallienus and Aurelian. Eutropius, ix. 13. Euseb. in Chron. Of all these writers, only the two last (but with strong probability) place the fall of Tetricus before that of Zenobia. M. de Boze (in the Academy of Inscriptions, tom. xxx.) does not wish, and Tillemont (tom. iii. p. 1189) does not dare, to follow them. I have been fairer than the one, and bolder than the other. [The sources leave no doubt that Aurelian had to deal with Zenobia and the East before he turned to Tetricus and Gaul. Tillemont's caution was justified.]

[58] Victor Junior in Aurelian. Eumenius mentions *Batavicæ*; some critics, without any reason, would fain alter the word to *Bagaudicæ*.

[59] Eumen. in Vet. Panegy. iv. 8 [*pro restaur. schol.* ed. Bährens, p. 119].

[60] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 246 [xxix. 13]. Autun was not restored till the reign of Diocletian. See Eumenius de restaurandis scholis. [On Autun (Augustodunum) see the elaborate essay of Mr. Freeman, Historical Essays, 4th series.]

[61] Almost everything that is said of the manners of Odenathus and Zenobia is taken from their lives in the Augustan History, by Trebellius Pollio, see p. 192, 198 [xxiv. 15 and 30].

[62] She never admitted her husband's embraces but for the sake of posterity. If her hopes were baffled, in the ensuing *month* she reiterated the experiment.

[63] Hist. August. p. 192, 193 [xxiv. 15]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 36 [39]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 633 [c. 24]. The last is clear and probable, the others confused and inconsistent. The text of Syncellus [i. p. 717, ed. Bonn], if not corrupt, is absolute nonsense.

[64] Odenathus and Zenobia often sent him, from the spoils of the enemy, presents of gems and toys, which he received with infinite delight.

[65] Some very unjust suspicions have been cast on Zenobia, as if she was accessory to her husband's death.

[66] Hist. August. p. 180, 181 [xxiii. 13. See Appendix 5.]

[67] See in Hist. August. p. 198 [xxiv. 30] Aurelian's testimony to her merit; and for the conquest of Egypt, Zosimus, l. i. p. 39, 40 [44].

[68] Timolaus, Herennianus, and Vaballathus. It is supposed that the two former were already dead before the war. On the last, Aurelian bestowed a small province of Armenia, with the title of king; several of his medals are still extant. See Tillemont, tom. iii. p. 1190. [See Appendix 5.]

[69] Zosimus, l. i. p. 44 [50].

[70] Vopiscus (in Hist. August. p. 217 [xxvi. 23, 24]) gives us an authentic letter, and a doubtful vision, of Aurelian. Apollonius of Tyana was born about the same time as Jesus Christ. His life (that of the former) is related in so fabulous a manner by his disciples, that we are at a loss to discover whether he was a sage, an impostor, or a fanatic.

[71] Zosimus, l. i. p. 46 [52].

[72] At a place called Immæ. Eutropius, Sextus Rufus, and Jerome mention only this first battle.

[73] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 217 [xxvi. 25] mentions only the second.

[74] Zosimus, l. i. p. 44-48 [50-53]. His account of the two battles is clear and circumstantial.

[75] It was five hundred and thirty-seven miles from Seleucia, and two hundred and three from the nearest coast of Syria, according to the reckoning of Pliny, who in a few words (Hist. Natur. v. 21) gives an excellent description of Palmyra.

[76] Some English travellers from Aleppo *discovered* the ruins of Palmyra, about the end of the last century. Our curiosity has since been gratified in a more splendid manner by Messieurs Wood and Dawkins. For the history of Palmyra, we may consult the masterly dissertation of Dr. Halley in the Philosophical Transactions; Lowthorp's Abridgment, vol. iii. p. 518.

[77] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 218 [xxvi. 26].

[78] From a very doubtful chronology I have endeavoured to extract the most probable date. [The death of Sapor (Shâhpûr I.) is variously placed in 269 and 272; his son was involved in a war with a pretender.]

[79] Hist. August. p. 218 [xxvi. 28]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 50 [55]. Though the camel is a heavy beast of burden, the dromedary, who is either of the same or of a kindred species, is used by the natives of Asia and Africa, on all occasions which require celerity. The Arabs affirm that he will run over as much ground in one day as their fleetest horses can perform in eight or ten. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle, tom. xi. p. 222, and Shaw's Travels, p. 167.

[80] Pollio in Hist. August. p. 199 [xxiv. 30, 23].

[81] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 219 [xxvi. 30]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 51 [56].

[82] Hist. August. p. 219 [xxvi. 31].

[83] See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 220, 242 [xxvi. 32, xxix. 5]. As an instance of luxury, it is observed that he had glass windows. He was remarkable for his strength and appetite, his courage and dexterity. From the letter of Aurelian we may justly infer that Firmus was the last of the rebels, and consequently that Tetricus was already suppressed.

[84] See the triumph of Aurelian, described by Vopiscus. He relates the particulars with his usual minuteness; and on this occasion they *happen* to be interesting. Hist. August. 220 [xxvi. 33].

[85] Among barbarous nations, women have often combated by the side of their husbands. But it is *almost* impossible that a society of Amazons should ever have existed either in the old or new world.

[86] The use of *Braccæ*, breeches, or trowsers, was still considered in Italy as a Gallic and barbarian fashion. The Romans, however, had made great advances towards it. To encircle the legs and thighs with *fasciæ*, or bands, was understood in the time of Pompey and Horace to be a proof of ill-health or effeminacy. In the age of Trajan, the custom was confined to the rich and luxurious. It gradually was adopted by the meanest of the people. See a very curious note of Casaubon, ad Sueton. in August. c. 82.

[87] Most probably the former: the latter, seen on the medals of Aurelian, only denote (according to the learned Cardinal Norris [Noris]) an oriental victory.

[88] The expression of Calpurnius (Eclog. i. 50), *Nullus ducet captiva triumphos*, as applied to Rome, contains a very manifest allusion and censure. [Gibbon supposed Calpurnius to have been a contemporary of Carus. It is now established that Calpurnius wrote under Nero, and that the games which he describes were celebrated by that prince. Some of the idylls however which were ascribed to Calpurnius were really written (as Haupt has proved) by Nemesianus, the author of the *Cynegetica*, who lived in the time of Carus.]

[89] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 199 [xxiv. 29]. Hieronym. in Chron. Prosper in Chron. Baronius supposes that Zenobius, bishop of Florence in the time of St. Ambrose, was of her family.

[90] Vopisc. in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39, 1]. Eutropius, ix. 13. Victor Junior. But Pollio in Hist. August. p. 196, says that Tetricus [xxiv. 24] was made corrector of all Italy. [See Appendix 6.]

[91] Hist. August. p. 197 [xxiv. 25].

[92] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 39]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 56 [61]. He placed in it the images of Belus and of the Sun, which he had brought from Palmyra. It was dedicated in the fourth year of his reign (Euseb. in Chron.), but was most assuredly begun immediately on his accession.

[93] See in the Augustan History, p. 210 [xxvi. 4], the omens of his fortune. His devotion to the sun appears in his letters, on his medals, and is mentioned in the Cæsars of Julian. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 107 [108, 109].

[94] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221 [xxvi. 37].

[95] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. Aurelian calls those soldiers *Hiberi* [in best MSS. the name is corrupt — *Iembariorum*], *Riparienses*, *Castriani*, and *Dacisci*.

[96] Zosimus, l. i. p. 56 [61]. Eutropius, ix. 14. Aurel. Victor.

[97] Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. Aurel. Victor. [Aurelian's monetary reform does not seem to have passed much beyond the stage of excellent intentions.]

[98] It already raged before Aurelian's return from Egypt. See Vopiscus, who quotes an original letter. Hist. August. p. 244 [xxix. 5].

[99] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 38]. The two Victors. Eutropius, ix. 14. Zosimus (l. i. p. 43) mentions only three senators, and places their death before the Eastern war.

[100]

Nulla catenati feralis pompa senatûs
Carnificum lassabit opus; nec carcere pleno
Infelix raros numerabit curia Patres.
— Calphurn. Eclog. i. 60.

[See above, note 88.]

[101] According to the younger Victor, he sometimes wore the diadem [Epit. 35]. *Deus* and *Dominus* appear on his medals.

[102] It was the observation of Diocletian. See Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 224 [xxvi. 44].

[103] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 221 [xxvi. 35]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 57 [62]. Eutrop. ix. 15. The two Victors. [Lactantius, de mort. pers. 6, John of Antioch, fr. 156 (F.H.G. iv.). The date of Aurelian's murder is uncertain, but Gibbon puts it at least eight months too early. Alexandrian coins prove that he was alive on, or shortly before (the coins, as Herzog suggests, might have been struck in advance and circulated notwithstanding the emperor's death) 29th August, 275. Herzog (who deals with the problem in his Gesch. und System der röm. Staatsverf. ii. p. 585) accepts the date 25th Sept. (Hist. Aug. xxvii. 3), for the election of Tacitus by the senate, rejecting (1) the date Feb. 3 (xxvi. 41, 3), and (2) the statements as to an interregnum of six or eight months; and (3) condemning the evidence of an inscription on an Orleans milestone (in Henzen's collection 5551) which would place Aurelian's death at the end of 275. This is confirmed by the statement that he reigned about five and a half years (cp. Hist. Aug. xxvi. 37, 4, as amended by Giambelli, after Eutropius, ix. 15); he did not become emperor before spring 270. See next chapter, note 2. Cp. Schiller, i. 871-2.]

[1] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 222 [xxvi. 40]. Aurelius Victor mentions a formal deputation from the troops to the senate.

[2] Vopiscus, our principal authority, wrote at Rome sixteen years only after the death of Aurelian; and, besides the recent notoriety of the facts, constantly draws his materials from the Journals of the Senate, and the original papers of the Ulpian library. [See vol. i. App. 1.] Zosimus and Zonaras appear as ignorant of this transaction as they were in general of the Roman constitution. [The interregnum was six months, according to Vopiscus, xxvii. 1, 1, and xxvi. 40, 4. Eight months results from combining the date 3rd February (xxvi. 41, 3) with 25th September (xxvii. 3, 2). But see last chapter, note 103.]

[3] Liv. i. 17. Dionys. Halicarn. l. ii. p. 115 [57]. Plutarch. in Numa, p. 60. The first of these writers relates the story like an orator, the second like a lawyer, and the third like a moralist, and none of them probably without some intermixture of fable.

[4] [This date is confirmed by xxvii. 13, 6, whereas that of the former meeting of the senate, 3rd February, is probably false.]

[5] Vopiscus (in Hist. August. p. 227 [xxvii. 4]) calls him "primæ sententiæ consularis"; and soon afterwards, *Princeps senatûs*. It is natural to suppose that the monarchs of Rome, disdaining that humble title, resigned it to the most ancient of the senators.

[6] The only objection to this genealogy is that the historian was named Cornelius, the emperor, Claudius [M. Claudius Tacitus]. But under the Lower Empire surnames were extremely various and uncertain.

[7] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. The Alexandrian Chronicle, by an obvious mistake, transfers that age to Aurelian.

[8] In the year 273 he was ordinary consul. But he must have been Suffectus many years before, and most probably under Valerian.

[9] *Bis millies octingenties*. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 229 [xxvii. 10]. This sum, according to the old standard, was equivalent to eight hundred and forty thousand Roman pounds of silver, each of the value of three pounds sterling. But in the age of Tacitus the coin had lost much of its weight and purity.

[10] After his accession, he gave orders that ten copies of the historian should be annually transcribed and placed in the public libraries. The Roman libraries have long since perished, and the most valuable part of Tacitus was preserved in a single MS. and discovered in a monastery of Westphalia. See Bayle, Dictionnaire, Art. *Tacite*, Landipsius ad Annal. ii. 9.

[11] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 227 [xxvii. 4].

[12] Hist. August. p. 228 [xxvii. 7]. Tacitus addressed the Prætorians by the appellation of *sanctissimi milites*, and the people by that of *sacratissimi Quirites*.

[13] In his manumissions he never exceeded the number of an hundred, as limited by the Caninian law, which was enacted under Augustus, and at length repealed by Justinian. See Casaubon ad locum Vopisci. [*S.C.* appears on his coins.]

[14] See the lives of Tacitus, Florianus, and Probus, in the Augustan History; we may be well assured that whatever the soldier gave the senator had already given.

[15] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 216 [xxvi. 20]. The passage is perfectly clear: yet both Casaubon and Salmasius wish to correct it. [*Est præterea vestræ auctoritatis arca publica.*]

[16] *Ibid.* p. 230, 232, 233 [xxvii. 18, 19]. The senators celebrated the happy restoration with hecatombs and public rejoicings.

[17] Hist. August. p. 228 [xxvii. 8].

[18] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 230 [xxvii. 13]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 57 [63]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. Two passages in the life of Probus (p. 236, 238 [8 and 12]) convince me that these Scythian invaders of Pontus were Alani. [Rather, Goths; cp. *Victoria Gothica*, Cohen, 6, 236; title *Gothicus Maximus*, Wilmanns, 1046.] If we may believe Zosimus (l. i. p. 58 [64]), Florianus pursued them as far as the Cimmerian Bosphorus. But he had scarcely time for so long and difficult an expedition.

[19] Eutropius [xv. 9] and Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 36] only say that he died; Victor Junior adds that it was of a fever. Zosimus. [i. 63] and Zonaras [ib.] affirm that he was killed by the soldiers. Vopiscus [xxvii. 13] mentions both accounts, and seems to hesitate. Yet surely these jarring opinions are easily reconciled.

[20] According to the two Victors, he reigned exactly two hundred days.

[21] [M. Anniius Florianus.]

[22] [*Vix duobus mensibus*, Hist. Aug. xxvii. 14; 2 months, 20 days, Eutropius.]

[23] Hist. August. p. 231 [xxvii. 14]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 58, 59 [64, 65]. Zonaras, l. xii. p. 637 [28]. Aurelius Victor says that Probus assumed the empire in Illyricum, an opinion which (though adopted by a very learned man) would throw that period of history into inextricable confusion. [Probus was *dux totius orientis*, but the army seems to have summoned him from Illyricum.]

[24] Hist. August. p. 229 [xxvii. 10, 1].

[25] He was to send judges to the Parthians, Persians, and Sarmatians, a president to Taprobana, and a proconsul to the Roman island (supposed by Casaubon and Salmasius to mean Britain). Such a history as mine (says Vopiscus with proper modesty) will not subsist a thousand years to expose or justify the prediction.

[26] For the private life of Probus, see Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 234-237 [xxviii. 3 *sqq.* M. Aurelius Probus, Eckhel, vii. 500.]

[27] [*Semper victorioso* which appears on coins was thus deserved before his elevation.]

[28] According to the Alexandrian Chronicle, he was fifty at the time of his death.

[29] The letter was addressed to the Prætorian prefect, whom (on condition of his good behaviour) he promised to continue in his great office. See Hist. Aug. p. 237 [xxviii. 10].

[30] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 237 [ib. 11]. The date of the letter is assuredly faulty. Instead of *Non. Februar.* we may read *Non. August.* [So Tillemont and Clinton. The evidence of Alexandrian coins shows that Probus ascended the throne before 29th August, 276.]

[31] Hist. August. p. 238 [ib. 12, 8]. It is odd that the senate should treat Probus less favourably than Marcus Antoninus. That prince had received, even before the death of Pius, *Jus quinta relationis*. See Capitolin. in Hist. August. p. 24.

[32] See the dutiful letter of Probus to the senate, after his German victories. Hist. August. p. 239 [xxviii. 15].

[33] The date and duration of the reign of Probus are very correctly ascertained by Cardinal Noris, in his learned work, *De Epochis Syro-Macedonum*, p. 96-105. A passage of Eusebius connects the second year of Probus with the eras of several of the Syrian cities.

[34] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239 [xxviii. 16, 3, omnes *Geticos* populos].

[35] Zosimus (l. i. p. 62-65 [69]) tells a very long and trifling story of Lydius the Isaurian robber.

[36] Zosim. l. i. p. 65 [71]. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 239, 240 [xxviii. 17, 4 and 18, 1]. But it seems incredible that the defeat of the savages of Æthiopia could affect

the Persian monarch. [There is no proof that Probus was in Egypt during his reign; but he celebrated the successes against the Blemmyes and the annexation of Ptolemais with a costly triumph.]

[37] Besides these well-known chiefs, several others are named by Vopiscus (Hist. August. p. 241 [ib. 22]), whose actions have not reached our knowledge.

[38] See the Cæsars of Julian, and Hist. August. p. 238, 240, 241 [ib. 15, 18].

[39] Zosimus, l. i. p. 62 [67, 68]. Hist. August. p. 240 [*leg.* 238, *ib.* 14]. But the latter supposes the punishment inflicted with the consent of their kings; if so, it was partial, like the offence. [In 277 Probus himself drove back the Alamanni “beyond the Neckar and the Alba” (= Rauhe Alp of Swabia) while his generals repelled the Franks. The Burgundian victory was perhaps in 278.]

[40] See Cluver. *Germania Antiqua*, l. iii. Ptolemy places in their country the city of Calisia, probably Calish in Silesia. [The author has made too much of the Λογίῶνες mentioned by Zosimus (*ib.*). It is quite uncertain who this people was.]

[41] *Feralis umbra* is the expression of Tacitus: it is surely a very bold one. [A misapprehension. *Umbra* is ablative and *feralis* agrees with *exercitus*.]

[42] Tacit. *Germania* (c. 43).

[43] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 238 [ib. 15].

[44] [These events belong to the year 277, and the reduction of the Alamanni. See above, note 39, where *Albam*, which Gibbon took for *Albim*, is explained.]

[45] Hist. August. p. 238, 239 [ib. 14, 15]. Vopiscus quotes a letter from the emperor to the senate, in which he mentions his design of reducing Germany into a province.

[46] Strabo, l. vii. [p. 290]. According to Velleius Paterculus (ii. 108) Maroboduus led his Marcomanni into Bohemia: Cluverius (*Germ. Antiq.* iii. 8) proves that it was from Swabia.

[47] These settlers, from the payment of tithes, were denominated *Decumates*. [Tacit. *Germania*, c. 29.]

[48] See notes de l'Abbé de la Blérierie à la Germanie de Tacite, p. 183. His account of the wall is chiefly borrowed (as he says himself) from the *Alsatia Illustrata* of Schoepflin. [For the Germanic limes see Appendix 7.]

[49] See *Recherches sur les Chinois et les Egyptiens*, tom. ii. p. 81-102. The anonymous author [de Pauw] is well acquainted with the globe in general, and with Germany in particular: with regard to the latter, he quotes a work of M. Hanselman; but he seems to confound the wall of Probus, designed against the Alemanni, with the fortification of the Mattiaci, constructed in the neighbourhood of Frankfort against the Catti.

[50] He distributed about fifty or sixty barbarians to a *Numerus*, as it was then called, a corps with whose established number we are not exactly acquainted.

[51] Camden's *Britannia*, Introduction, p. 136; but he speaks from a very doubtful conjecture.

[52] Zosimus, l. i. p. 62 [68]. According to Vopiscus, another body of Vandals was less faithful.

[53] *Hist. August.* p. 240 [ib. 18]. They were probably expelled by the Goths. Zosim. l. i. p. 66 [71].

[54] *Hist. August.* p. 240 [ib.].

[55] *Panegy. Vet.* v. 18 [ed. Bährens, p. 145]. Zosimus, l. i. p. 66 [71].

[56] Vopiscus in *Hist. August.* p. 245, 246 [xxix. 10]. The unfortunate orator had studied rhetoric at Carthage, and was therefore more probably a Moor (Zosim. l. i. p. 60 [66]) than a Gaul, as Vopiscus calls him.

[57] Zonaras, l. xii. p. 638 [29].

[58] A very surprising instance is recorded of the prowess of Proculus. He had taken one hundred Sarmatian virgins. The rest of the story we must relate in his own language. *Ex his unâ nocte decem inivi: omnes tamen, quod in me erat, mulieres intra dies quindecim reddidi.* Vopiscus in *Hist. August.* p. 246 [ib. 12].

[59] Proculus, who was a native of Albengue on the Genoese coast, armed two thousand of his own slaves. His riches were great, but they were acquired by robbery. It was afterwards a saying of his family, *Nec latrones esse, nec principes sibi placere.* Vopiscus in *Hist. August.* p. 247 [ib. 13: *sibi non placere esse vel principes vel latrones*].

[60] *Hist. August.* p. 240 [xxviii. 19].

[61] Zosim. l. i. p. 66 [71].

[62] *Hist. August.* p. 236 [ib. 9].

[63] Aurel. Victor in *Prob.* But the policy of Hannibal, unnoticed by any more ancient writer, is irreconcilable with the history of his life. He left Africa when he was nine years old, returned to it when he was forty-five, and immediately lost his army in the decisive battle of Zama. Livius, xxx. 37 [*leg.* 35].

[64] *Hist. August.* p. 240 [ib. 18, 8]. Eutrop. ix. 17. Aurel. Victor in *Prob.* Victor Junior [ep. 37, 3]. He revoked the prohibition of Domitian, and granted a general permission of planting vines to the Gauls, the Britons, and the Pannonians.

[65] Julian bestows a severe, and indeed excessive, censure on the rigour of Probus, who, as he thinks, almost deserved his fate. [In the *Cæsars*.]

[66] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 241 [ib. 20, 3-6]. He lavishes on this idle hope a large stock of very foolish eloquence.

[67] *Turris ferrata*. It seems to have been a movable tower, and cased with iron. [Carus (according to Greek sources) was proclaimed Imperator in Rætia before the death of Probus. In fact the hesitation of Probus about proceeding to quell the rebellion seems to have been the immediate cause of his fall. See Anon. Contin. of Dio, 5, and John of Antioch, fr. 160 (F.H.G. iv.).]

[68] Probus, et vere probus situs est: Victor omnium gentium Barbararum; victor etiam tyrannorum. [He survived the 29th August, 276, we know by Alexandrian coins. There is some variation in the sources as to the length of his reign. Hist. Aug. xxviii. 21, he was killed in the fifth year of his reign; Aurelius Victor, *Cæs.* 37, 4, he reigned somewhat less than six years, epit. 37, 1, six years; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, he reigned six years, three months; Orosius, 7, 24, gives him six years, four months.]

[69] Yet all this may be conciliated. He was born at Narbonne [Narona] in Illyricum, confounded by Eutropius with the more famous city of that name in Gaul. His father might be an African, and his mother a noble Roman. [M. Aurelius] Carus himself was educated in the capital. See Scaliger, *Animadversion. ad Euseb. Chron.* p. 241.

[70] Probus had requested of the senate an equestrian statue and a marble palace, at the public expense, as a just recompense of the singular merit of Carus. Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 249 [xxx. 6].

[71] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 242, 249 [xxix. 1, xxx. 3]. Julian excludes the emperor Carus and both his sons from the banquet of the *Cæsars*.

[72] John Malala, tom. i. p. 401. But the authority of that ignorant Greek is very slight. He ridiculously derives from Carus the city of Carrhæ, and the province of Caria, the latter of which is mentioned by Homer. [The names of the sons were M. Aurelius Carinus and M. Aurelius Numerianus.]

[73] Hist. Aug. p. 249 [xxx. 5]. Carus congratulated the senate, that one of their own order was made emperor.

[74] Ibid. p. 242 [xxviii. 24].

[75] See the first eclogue of Calphurnius. The design of it is preferred by Fontenelle to that of Virgil's Pollio. See tom. iii. p. 148. [See above, chap. xi. note 88.]

[76] Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 7]. Eutropius, ix. 18. Pagi, *Annal.*

[77] [And Quadi, see Eckhel, 7, 522.]

[78] Agathias, l. iv. p. 135. We find one of his sayings in the Bibliothèque Orientale of M. d'Herbelot. "The definition of humanity includes all other virtues." [The Persian king was Varahran II.]

[79] Synesius tells this story of Carinus: and it is much more natural to understand it of Carus than (as Petavius and Tillemont choose to do) of Probus.

[80] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250 [ib.]. Eutropius, ix. 18. The two Victors.

[81] To the Persian victory of Carus, I refer the dialogue of the *Philopatriss*, which has so long been an object of dispute among the learned. But to explain and justify my opinion would require a dissertation. [This dialogue, always printed with Lucian's works, has been held to belong to the reign of Heraclius, by R. Crampe, *Philopatriss*, 1894.] But cp. below, Appendix 10.

[82] Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 8]. Yet Eutropius, Festus, Rufus, the two Victors, Jerome, Sidonius Apollinaris, Syncellus, and Zonaras, all ascribe the death of Carus to lightning. [It took place before Aug. 29, 283.]

[83] See Nemesian. Cynegeticon, v. 71, &c.

[84] See Festus and his commentators, on the word *Scribonianum*. Places struck with lightning were surrounded with a wall; things were buried with mysterious ceremony.

[85] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 250 [xxx. 9]. Aurelius Victor seems to believe the prediction, and to approve the retreat.

[86] Nemesian. Cynegeticon, v. 69. He was a contemporary, but a poet.

[87] [The name of one of his wives, Magnia Urbica, is now known; C.I.L. 8, 2384.]

[88] *Cancellarius*. This word, so humble in its origin, has, by a singular fortune, risen into the title of the first great office of state in the monarchies of Europe. See Casaubon and Salmasius, ad Hist. August. p. 253 [xxx. 16].

[89] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 253, 254 [xxx. 16, 17]. Eutropius, ix. 19. Victor Junior. The reign of Diocletian, indeed, was so long and prosperous, that it must have been very unfavourable to the fame of Carinus.

[90] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 254 [xxx. 17]. He calls him Carus, but the sense is sufficiently obvious, and the words were often confounded.

[91] See Calphurnius. Eclog. vii. 43. We may observe that the spectacles of Probus were still recent, and that the poet is seconded by the historian. [See chap. xi. note 88.]

[92] The philosopher Montaigne (Essais, l. iii. 6) gives a very just and lively view of Roman magnificence in these spectacles.

[93] Vopiscus in Hist. August. p. 240 [xxviii. 19].

[94] They are called *Onagri*; but the number is too inconsiderable for mere wild asses. Cuper (de Elephantis Exercitat. ii. 7) has proved from Oppian, Dion, and an anonymous Greek, that zebras had been seen at Rome. They were brought from some island of the ocean, perhaps Madagascar.

[95] Carinus gave an hippopotamus (see Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 66). In the later spectacles, I do not recollect any crocodiles, of which Augustus once exhibited thirty-six. Dion Cassius, l. lv. p. 781 [10].

[96] Capitulin. in Hist. August. p. 164, 165 [xx. 32, 33]. We are not acquainted with the animals whom he calls *archeleontes*, some read *argoleontes* [Salmasius], others *agrioleontes* [Scaliger]: both corrections are very nugatory.

[97] Plin. Hist. Natur. viii. 6, from the annals of Piso.

[98] See Maffei, Verona Illustrata, P. iv. l. i. c. 2.

[99] Maffei, l. ii. c. 2. The height was very much exaggerated by the ancients. It reached almost to the heavens, according to Calphurnius (Eclog. vii. 23), and surpassed the ken of human sight, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (xvi. 10). Yet how trifling to the great pyramid of Egypt, which rises five hundred feet perpendicular!

[100] According to different copies of Victor, we read seventy-seven thousand, or eighty-seven thousand spectators; but Maffei (l. ii. c. 12) finds room on the open seats for no more than thirty-four thousand. The remainder were contained in the upper covered galleries.

[101] See Maffei, l. ii. c. 5-12. He treats the very difficult subject with all possible clearness, and like an architect, as well as an antiquarian.

[102] Calphurn. Eclog. vii. 64, 73. These lines are curious, and the whole Eclogue has been of infinite use to Maffei. Calphurnius, as well as Martial (see his first book), was a poet, but when they described the amphitheatre, they both wrote from their own senses, and to those of the Romans.

[103] Consult Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii. 16, xxxvii. 11.

[104]

Balteus en gemmis, en inlita porticus auro.
Certatim radiant, &c.
—Calphurn. vii. [47].

[105] Et Martis vultus et Apollinis esse putavi, says Calphurnius; but John Malala, who had perhaps seen pictures of Carinus, describes him as thick, short, and white, tom. i. p. 403.

[106] With regard to the time when these Roman games were celebrated, Scaliger, Salmasius, and Cuper have given themselves a great deal of trouble to perplex a very clear subject.

[107] Nemesianus (in the *Cynegeticon*) seems to anticipate in his fancy that auspicious day [80 *sqq.*].

[108] He won all the crowns from Nemesianus, with whom he vied in didactic poetry. [*Nam et cum Olympio Nemesiano contendit qui ῥλιευτικῶ? κυνηγετικῶ? et ναυτικῶ? scripsit inque omnibus colonis illustratus emicuit.*] The senate erected a statue to the son of Carus, with a very ambiguous inscription, "To the most powerful of orators." See Vopiscus in *Hist. August.* p. 251 [xxx. 11].

[109] A more natural cause at least, than that assigned by Vopiscus (*Hist. August.* p. 251 [ib. 12]), incessant weeping for his father's death.

[110] In the Persian war, Aper was suspected of a design to betray Carus. *Hist. August.* p. 250 [xxx. 8].

[111] We are obliged to the *Alexandrian Chronicle*, p. 274, for the knowledge of the time and place where Diocletian was elected emperor. [*Chronicon Pasch.* i. 510, ed. Bonn.]

[112] *Hist. August.* p. 251 [xxx. 12]. *Eutrop.* ix. 18. Hieronym. in *Chron.* According to these *judicious* writers, the death of Numerian was discovered by the stench of his dead body. Could no aromatics be found in the Imperial household?

[113] [C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus. He was *comes domesticorum*.]

[114] Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 39]. *Eutropius*, ix. 20. Hieronym. in *Chron.*

[115] [Vopiscus was informed by his grandfather, an eye-witness of this scene, that Diocletian uttered the famous words of *Æneas*: *Æneæ magni dextra cadis* (*Virg. Æn.* x. 830).]

[116] Vopiscus in *Hist. August.* p. 252 [ib. 14, 15]. The reason why Diocletian killed *Aper* (a wild boar) was founded on a prophecy and a pun, as foolish as they are well known.

[117] [And also a certain measure of energy. In his struggle against Diocletian he gained successes before his final defeat. See *Hist. Aug.* ib. 18, 2. And he suppressed a tyrant in Pannonia, one M. Aurelius Julianus (perhaps *corrector* of Venetia). *Aur. Vict.* Cæs. 39. John of Antioch, 163.]

[118] *Eutropius* marks its situation very accurately; it was between the Mons Aureus and Viminacium. M. d'Anville (*Géographie Ancienne*, tom. i. p. 304) places Margus at Kastolatz in Servia, a little below Belgrade and Semendria. [It is where the river Margus, now Morawa, joins the Danube. Cp. *Chron.* of 354, p. 648, and *Jordanes*,

Rom. 295. Diocletian called the province of Upper Mœsia *Margensis* in memory of this victory.]

[119] Hist. August. p. 254 [ib. 18]. Eutropius, ix. 20. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39]. Victor in Epitome [38].

[1] Eutrop. ix. 19. Victor in Epitom. [39, 1]. The town seems to have been properly Doclia, from the small tribe of Illyrians (see Cellarius, Geograph. Antiqua, tom. i. p. 393); and the original name of the fortunate slave was probably Docles; he first lengthened it to the Grecian harmony of Diocles, and at length to the Roman majesty of Diocletianus. He likewise assumed the patrician name of Valerius, and it is usually given him by Aurelius Victor.

[2] See Dacier on the sixth satire of the second book of Horace. Cornel. Nepos, in Vit. Eumen. c. 1.

[3] Lactantius (or whoever was the author of the little treatise *De Mortibus Persecutorum* [see vol. i. App. 1]) accuses Diocletian of *timidity* in two places, c. 7, 8. In chap. 9, he says of him, “erat in omni tumultu meticulosus et animi disjectus.”

[4] [It is usual to express this fact by saying that the Principate founded by Augustus was transformed by Diocletian into an absolute Monarchy.]

[5] In this encomium, Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39, 5] seems to convey a just, though indirect, censure of the cruelty of Constantius. It appears from the *Fasti*, that Aristobulus remained prefect of the city, and that he ended with Diocletian the consulship which he had commenced with Carinus.

[6] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39] styles Diocletian, “Parentem potius quam Dominum.” See Hist. August. p. 30 [iv. 19].

[7] The question of the time when Maximian received the honours of Cæsar and Augustus has divided modern critics, and given occasion to a great deal of learned wrangling. I have followed M. de Tillemont (*Histoire des Empereurs*, tom. iv. p. 500-505), who has weighed the several reasons and difficulties with his scrupulous accuracy. [The question has been since discussed by Mommsen (*Abhandlungen* of the Berlin Academy for 1860). Maximian seems to have been named Cæsar, with tribunician power, soon after 17th Sept. 285, and to have become Augustus with full imperial powers 1st April, 286.]

[8] In an oration delivered before him (*Panegy. Vet.* ii. 8), Mamertinus expresses a doubt whether his hero, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. From thence we may fairly infer that Maximian was more desirous of being considered as a soldier, than as a man of letters, and it is in this manner that we can often translate the language of flattery into that of truth. [We can still trace his rough features on coins.]

[9] Lactantius de M. P. c. 8. Aurelius Victor [ib.]. As among the Panegyrics we find orations pronounced in praise of Maximian, and others which flatter his enemies at his expense, we derive some knowledge from the contrast.

[10] See the second and third Panegyrics, particularly iii. 3, 10, 14, but it would be tedious to copy the diffuse and affected expressions of their false eloquence. With regard to the titles, consult Aurel. Victor, Lactantius de M. P. c. 52. Spanheim de Usu Numismatum, &c. Dissertat. xii. 8. [The titles have importance as showing that, though the colleagues were formally co-equal, Diocletian held a certain primacy.]

[11] Aurelius Victor. Victor in Epitome. Eutrop. ix. 22. Lactant. de M. P. c. 8. Hieronym. in Chron. [For date cp. Diocletian's edict *de pretiis*; the two Cæsars have *trib. pot.* ix. in 301 See Incert. Paneg. Constantio Cæs. 2-4. Chron. Pasch. i. 512. Mommsen, *loc. cit.* Also C.I.L. 2, 1439.]

[12] It is only among the modern Greeks that Tillemont can discover his appellation of Chlorus. Any remarkable degree of paleness seems inconsistent with the *rubor* mentioned in Panegyric. v. 19. [Their names on their elevation became: C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus, and M. Flavius Valerius Constantius.]

[13] Julian, the grandson of Constantius, boasts that his family was derived from the warlike Mæsians. Misopogon, p. 348. The Dardanians dwelt on the [southern] edge of Mæsia.

[14] Galerius married Valeria, the daughter of Diocletian; if we speak with strictness, Theodora, the wife of Constantius, was daughter only to the wife of Maximian. Spanheim Dissertat. xi. 2.

[15] This division agrees with that of the four prefectures; yet there is some reason to doubt whether Spain was not a province of Maximian. See Tillemont, tom. iv. p. 517. [Lactantius, 8, says that Maximian had Spain, and he is probably right. On the contrary Aurelius Victor, Cæs. 39, 30, gives him only Africa and Italy; and so Julian, Or. 2, 51, D, who distinctly assigns Spain to Constantius.]

[16] [This statement must be qualified in regard to the Cæsars, who had no legislative power, no control over the Imperial revenue, no consistorium. Nor had they the right of appointing the officials in their dominions. Their military powers were dependent on the Augusti, to whom all their victories were ascribed. They wore the purple, but not the diadem.]

[17] Julian in Cæsarib. p. 315. Spanheim's notes to the French translation, p. 122.

[18] The general name of *Bagaudæ* (in the signification of Rebels) continued till the fifth century in Gaul. Some critics derive it from a Celtic word, *Bagad*, a tumultuous assembly. Scaliger ad Euseb. Du Cange Glossar. [For the social state of Gaul, and the action of the priests, cp. Salvian, de Gubern. Dei, v. 5, 6.]

[19] Chronique de Froissart, vol. i. c. 182, ii. 73-79. The *naïveté* of his story is lost in our best modern writers.

[20] Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi. 13. Orgetorix, the Helvetian, could arm for his defence a body of ten thousand slaves.

[21] Their oppression and misery are acknowledged by Eumenius (Panegy. vi. 8). Gallias efferatas injuriis.

[22] Panegy. Vet. ii. 4. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39].

[23] Ælianus and Amandus. We have medals coined by them. Goltzius in Thes. R. A. p. 117, 121. [See Eckhel, 8, 41, but they are condemned as spurious by Cohen.]

[24] Levibus præliis domuit. Eutrop. ix. 20.

[25] The fact rests indeed on very slight authority, a life of St. Babolinus, which is probably of the seventh century. See Duchesne, Scriptorum Rer. Francicar. tom. i. p. 662.

[26] Aurelius Victor calls them Germans. Eutropius (ix. 21) gives them the name of Saxons [(Mare) quod *Franci et Saxones* infestabant]. But Eutropius lived in the ensuing century, and seems to use the language of his time.

[27] The three expressions of Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, and Eumenius, “vilissime natus,” “Bataviæ alumnus,” and “Menapiæ civis,” give us a very doubtful account of the birth of Carausius. Stukely, however (Hist. of Carausius, p. 62), chooses to make him a native of St. David’s and a prince of the blood royal of Britain. The former idea he had found in Richard of Cirencester, p. 44.

[28] Panegy. v. 12. Britain at this time was secure, and slightly guarded. [For coins with *Exspeciate veni* and *Genius Britannicæ* see Eckhel, 8, 45.]

[29] Panegy. Vet. v. 11, vii. 9. The orator Eumenius wished to exalt the glory of the hero (Constantius), with the importance of the conquest. Notwithstanding our laudable partiality for our native country, it is difficult to conceive that in the beginning of the fourth century England deserved *all* these commendations. A century and a half before, it hardly paid its own establishment. See Appian in Proœm.

[30] [Six. See Appendix 8.]

[31] As a great number of medals of Carausius are still preserved, he is become a very favourite object of antiquarian curiosity, and every circumstance of his life and actions has been investigated with sagacious accuracy. Dr. Stukely in particular has devoted a large volume to the British emperor. I have used his materials, and rejected most of his fanciful conjectures.

[32] When Mamertinus pronounced his first Panegyric [21st April, 289], the naval preparations of Maximian were completed: and the orator presaged an assured victory. His silence in the second Panegyric might alone inform us that the expedition had not succeeded.

[33] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39, 39], Eutropius [ix. 22], and the medals (Pax Aug.) inform us of the temporary reconciliation: though I will not presume (as Dr. Stukely has done, *Medallic History of Carausius*, p. 86, &c.) to insert the identical articles of the treaty. [See Eckhel, 8, 47. *Carausius et fraires sui* appeared on his coins, as well as other manifestations of the unity of the empire.]

[34] With regard to the recovery of Britain, we obtain a few hints from Aurelius Victor and Eutropius. [Chief source: *Incerti Paneg. Constantio.*]

[35] John Malala, in Chron. Antiochen. tom. i. p. 408, 409 [p. 308, ed. Bonn].

[36] Zosimus, l. i. p. 3 [error for ii. cap.34]. That partial historian seems to celebrate the vigilance of Diocletian, with the design of exposing the negligence of Constantine; we may, however, listen to an orator: “*Nam quid ego alarum et cohortium castra percenseam, toto Rheni et Istri et Euphratis limite restituta?*” Panegy. Vet. iv. 18.

[37] *Ruunt omnes in sanguinem suum populi, quibus non contigit esse Romanis, obstinatæque feritatis pœnas nunc sponte persolvunt.* Panegy. Vet. iii. 16, Mamertinus illustrates the fact by the example of almost all the nations of the world.

[38] He complained, though not with the strictest truth: “*Jam fluxisse annos quindecim in quibus, in Illyrico, ad ripam Danubii relagatus cum gentibus barbaris luctaret.*” Lactant. de M. P. c. 18.

[39] In the Greek text of Eusebius, we read six thousand, a number which I have preferred to the sixty thousand of Jerome, Orosius, Eutropius, and his Greek translator Pæanius. [For the distinction of the various campaigns against the German nations in early years of Diocletian’s reign see Appendix 8.]

[40] Panegy. Vet. vii. 21. [The *pagus Chamavorum* near Langres was probably settled at this time.]

[41] There was a settlement of the Sarmatians in the neighbourhood of Treves, which seems to have been deserted by those lazy barbarians: Ausonius speaks of them in his Moselle [5 *sqq.*].

Unde iter ingrediens nemorosa per avia solum,
Et nulla humani spectans vestigia cultus

.....

Arvaque Sauromatûm nuper metata colonis.

There was a town of the Carpi in the Lower Mæsia. [In Gaul Constantius had to rebuild the ruined Autun and Trier.]

[42] See the rhetorical exultation of Eumenius. Panegy. vii. 9.

[43] Scaliger (*Animadvers. ad Euseb.* p. 243) decides, in his usual manner, that the *Quinque gentiani*, or five African nations, were the five great cities, the Pentapolis of the inoffensive province of Cyrene. [The *Quinquegentanei* had, along with the

Bavares, invaded Numidia in 260, and were routed by the legatus, Macrinus Decianus, C.I.L. viii. 2615. Again about ten years before Maximian's expedition the same peoples were crushed by Aurelius Litua, the præses of Mauretania Cæsariensis.]

[44] After this defeat, Julian stabbed himself with a dagger, and immediately leaped into the flames. Victor in Epitome [39, 3. John of Antioch, fr. 164.]

[45] [A correction has been made here in the punctuation of the text. See *Introduction*, p. xlix.]

[46] Tu ferocissimos Mauritaniæ populos inaccessis montium jugis et naturali munitione fidentes, expugnasti, recepisti, transtulisti. Panegyri. Vet. vi. 8. [Incert. Pan. Max. et Const. Aug. 8. Maximian was still in Africa on 10 March 298. Frag. Vat. 41.]

[47] See the description of Alexandria in Hirtius de Bel. Alexandrin. c. 5.

[48] Eutrop. ix. 24. Orosius, vii. 25. John Malala in Chron. Antioch. p. 409, 410 [p. 309, ed. Bonn]. Yet Eumenius assures us that Egypt was pacified by the clemency of Diocletian. [Achilleus seems to have been preceded by another tyrant, L. Domitius Domitianus, whose reign was so short that he is not mentioned by any writer, and his existence is only known by some coins, which puzzle numismatists. It has been conjectured, but not proved, that he and Achilleus were one and the same person. Compare Eckhel, 8, 41; Cohen, 5, 549, also Schiller, ii. 138.]

[49] Eusebius (in Chron.) places their destruction several years sooner, and at a time when Egypt itself was in a state of rebellion against the Romans. [Diocletian left Nicomedia at end of March, 295; seems to have begun siege of Alexandria in July, for it lasted eight months, and a rescript is dated from it on 31 March, 296. See Mommsen, *loc. cit.*]

[50] Strabo, l. xvii. p. 1, 172 [*leg.* 819]. Pomponius Mela. l. i. c. 4. His words are curious, "Intra, si credere libet, vix homines magisque semiferi; Ægipanes, et Blemmyes, et Satyri."

[51] Ausus sese inserere fortunæ et provocare arma Romana.

[52] See Procopius de Bell. Persic. l. i. c. 19.

[53] He fixed the public allowance of corn for the people of Alexandria, at two millions of *medimni*; about four hundred thousand quarters. Chron. Paschal. p. 276. Procop. Hist. Arcan. c. 26.

[54] John Antioch. in Excerpt. Valesian. p. 834 [F.H.G. iv. p. 601]. Suidas in Diocletian.

[55] See a short history and confutation of Alchymy, in the works of that philosophical compiler, La Mothe le Vayer, tom. i. p. 327-353.

[56] See the education and strength of Tiridates in the Armenian history of Moses of Chorene, l. ii. c. 76. He could seize two wild bulls by the horns, and break them off with his hands.

[57] If we give credit to the younger Victor [Epit. 41], who supposes that, in the year 323, Licinius was only sixty years of age, he could scarcely be the same person as the patron of Tiridates; but we know from much better authority (Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. l. x. c. 8) that Licinius was at that time in the last period of old age: sixteen years before, he is represented with grey hairs, and as the contemporary of Galerius. See Lactant. c. 32. Licinius was probably born about the year 250.

[58] See the sixty-second and sixty-third books of Dion Cassius [cp. lxxiii. 5].

[59] Moses of Chorene, Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 74. The statues had been erected by Valarsaces, who reigned in Armenia about 130 years before Christ, and was the first king of the family of Arsaces (see Moses, Hist. Armen. l. ii. 2, 3). The deification of the Arsacides is mentioned by Justin (xli. 5) and by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6).

[60] The Armenian nobility was numerous and powerful. Moses mentions many families which were distinguished under the reign of Valarsaces (l. ii. 7) and which still subsisted in his own time, about the middle of the fifth century. See the preface of his Editors.

[61] She was named Chosroiduchta, and had not the *os patulum* like other women. (Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 79.) I do not understand the expression.

[62] In the Armenian history (l. ii. 78) as well as in the Geography (p. 367) China is called Zenia, or Zenastan. It is characterised by the production of silk, by the opulence of the natives, and by their love of peace, above all the other nations of the earth.

[63] Vou-ti, the first emperor of the seventh dynasty, who then reigned in China, had political transactions with Fergana, a province of Sogdiana, and is said to have received a Roman embassy. (Histoire des Huns, tom. i. p. 38.) In those ages the Chinese kept a garrison at Kashgar, and one of their generals, about the time of Trajan, marched as far as the Caspian Sea. With regard to the intercourse between China and the Western countries, a curious memoir of M. de Guignes may be consulted in the Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxxii. p. 355.

[64] See Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 81.

[65] Ipsos Persas ipsumque Regem ascitis Sacis, et Rufiis, et Gellis, petit frater Ormies. Panegyric. Vet. iii. 1 [leg. 17; Genethl. Max. p. 114, ed. Bährens]. The Sacæ were a nation of wandering Scythians, who encamped towards the sources of the Oxus and the Jaxartes. The Gelli were the inhabitants of Ghilan along the Caspian Sea, and who so long, under the name of Dilemites, infested the Persian monarchy. See d'Herbelot, Bibliothèque Orientale.

[66] Moses of Chorene takes no notice of this second revolution, which I have been obliged to collect from a passage of Ammianus Marcellinus (l. xxiii. 5). Lactantius

speaks of the ambition of Narses: “Concitus domesticis exemplis avi sui Saporis ad occupandum orientem magnis copiis inhiabat.” De Mort. Persecut. c. 9. [Narses, son of Varahrâm II., succeeded after Sept. 13, 293; Nöldeke, 416.]

[67] We may readily believe that Lactantius ascribes to cowardice the conduct of Diocletian. Julian, in his oration, says that he remained with all the forces of the empire; a very hyperbolic expression. [In the early part of the year, at least till April, Diocletian was in Egypt.]

[68] Our five abbreviators, Eutropius, Festus, the two Victors, and Orosius, all relate the last and great battle; but Orosius [vii. 25] is the only one who speaks of the two former.

[69] The nature of the country is finely described by Plutarch, in the life of Crassus, and by Xenophon, in the first book of the Anabasis. [The mistake of Galerius was similar to that of Crassus.]

[70] See Foster’s Dissertation, in the second volume of the translation of the Anabasis by Spelman; which I will venture to recommend as one of the best versions extant.

[71] Hist. Armen. l. ii. c. 76. I have transferred this exploit of Tiridates from an imaginary defeat to the real one of Galerius.

[72] Ammian. Marcellin. l. xiv. [11]. The mile, in the hands of Eutropius (ix. 24), of Festus (c. 25), and of Orosius (vii. 25), easily increased to *several* miles.

[73] Aurelius Victor. Jornandes de rebus Geticis, c. 21.

[74] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39] says, “Per Armeniam in hostes contendit, quæ ferme sola, seu facilius vincendi via est.” He followed the conduct of Trajan, and the idea of Julius Cæsar.

[75] Xenophon’s Anabasis, l. iii. [c. 4]. For that reason, the Persian cavalry encamped sixty stadia from the enemy.

[76] The story is told by Ammianus, l. xxii. [4, 8]. Instead of *saccum* some read *scutum* [*sacculum* is the true reading, the MSS. having *sacutum* and *sæculum*].

[77] The Persians confessed the Roman superiority in morals as well as in arms. Eutrop. ix. 24. But this respect and gratitude of enemies is very seldom to be found in their own accounts.

[78] The account of the negotiation is taken from the fragments of Peter the Patrician, in the Excerpta Legationum, published in the Byzantine Collection [also in vol. iv. of Müller’s Fragm. Hist. Græc.]. Peter lived under Justinian; but it is very evident, by the nature of his materials, that they are drawn from the most authentic and respectable writers.

[79] Adeo Victor (says Aurelius) ut ni Valerius, cujus mutu omnia gerebantur, abnuisset, Romani fasces in provinciam novam ferrentur. Verum pars terrarum tamen nobis utilior quæsita.

[80] He had been governor of Sumium. (Pet. Patricius in Excerpt. Legat. p. 30 [F.H.G. iv. p. 189].) This province seems to be mentioned by Moses of Chorene (Geograph. p. 360), and lay to the east of Mount Ararat.

[81] By an error of the geographer Ptolemy, the position of Singara is removed from the Aboras to the Tigris, which may have produced the mistake of Peter in assigning the latter river for the boundary, instead of the former. The line of the Roman frontier traversed, but never followed, the course of the Tigris. [The Aboras rises a long way to the west of the Tigris; and Nisibis is situated on the Mygdonius.]

[82] Procopius de *Ædificiis*, l. ii. c.

[83] Three of the provinces, Zabdicene, Arzanene, and Carduene [Corduene], are allowed on all sides. But instead of the other two, Peter (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30 [ib.]) inserts Rehimene and Sophene. I have preferred Ammianus (l. xxv. 7), because it might be proved, that Sophene was never in the hand of the Persians, either before the reign of Diocletian, or after that of Jovian. For want of correct maps, like those of M. d'Anville, almost all the moderns, with Tillemont and Valesius at their head, have imagined that it was in respect to Persia, and not to Rome, that the five provinces were situate beyond the Tigris. [Intilene and Moxoene are the same. Gibbon's statements are not correct. Peter gives Intêlene and Sophene; Ammianus, Moxoene and Rehimene. Thus the question is between Rehimene and Sophene.]

[84] Xenophon's *Anabasis*, l. iv. [3]. Their bows were three cubits in length, their arrows two; they rolled down stones that were each a waggon load. The Greeks found a great many villages in that rude country.

[85] According to Eutropius (vi. 9, as the text is represented by the best MSS.) the city of Tigranocerta was in Arzanene. The names and situation of the other three may be faintly traced.

[86] Compare Herodotus, l. i. c. 97, with Moses Chorenens. *Hist. Armen.* l. ii. c. 84, and the map of Armenia given by his editors.

[87] *Hiberi, locorum potentes, Caspiâ viâ Sarmatum in Armenios raptim effundunt.* Tacit. *Annal.* vi. 33. See Strabon. *Geograph.* l. xi. p. 764 [500].

[88] Peter Patricius (in Excerpt. Leg. p. 30 [F.H.G. iv. p. 189]) is the only writer who mentions the Iberian article of the treaty.

[89] Eusebius in *Chron. Pagi ad annum.* Till the discovery of the treatise de *Mortibus Persecutorum*, it was not certain that the triumph and the *Vicennalia* were celebrated at the same time. [Date still uncertain. The triumph, acc. to Clinton, was in the year before the *Vicennalia*, but Preuss agrees with Gibbon.]

[90] At the time of the Vicennalia, Galerius seems to have kept his station on the Danube. See Lactant. de M. P. c. 38.

[91] [The remarkable edict of 301, in which Diocletian attempted to fix maximum prices (see Appendix 9), records the number of victories of which each emperor could boast. Diocletian counted six German, four Sarmatian victories; Maximian, five German and four Sarmatian; both Cæsars, two German and two Sarmatian. To all four fell equally, two Persian, one Britannic, one Caspian, one Armenian, one Median, and one Adiabenic victory.]

[92] Eutropius (ix. 27) mentions them as a part of the triumph. As the *persons* had been restored to Narses, nothing more than their *images* could be exhibited.

[93] Livy gives us a speech of Camillus on that subject (v. 51-55 [54]), full of eloquence and sensibility, in opposition to a design of removing the seat of government from Rome to the neighbouring city of Veii.

[94] Julius Cæsar was reproached with the intention of removing the empire to Ilium or Alexandria. See Sueton. in Cæsar. c. 79. According to the ingenious conjecture of Le Fèvre and Dacier, the third ode of the third book of Horace was intended to divert Augustus from the execution of a similar design.

[95] See Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 39], who likewise mentions the buildings erected by Maximian at Carthage, probably during the Moorish war. We shall insert some verses of Ausonius de Clar. urb. v.

Et Mediolani mira omnia: copia rerum:
Innumeræ cultæque domus; fecunda virorum
Ingenia, et mores læti; tum duplici muro
Amplificata loci species; populique voluptas
Circus; et inclusi moles cuneata Theatri;
Templa, Palatinæque arces, opulensque Moneta,
Et regio *Herculei* celebris sub honore lavacri.
Cunctaque marmoreis ornata Peristyla signis;
Mœniaque in valli formam circumdata labro,
Omnia quæ magnis operum velut æmula formis
Excellunt: nec juncta premit vicinia Romæ.

[96] Lactant. de M. P. c. 7. Libanius Orat. viii. p. 203.

[97] Lactant. de M. P. c. 17. On a similar occasion Ammianus mentions the *dicacitas plebis*, as not very agreeable to an Imperial ear. (See l. xvi. c. 10) [*dicacitate plebis oblectabatur* are the words of Ammian.].

[98] Lactantius accuses Maximian of destroying fictis criminationibus lumina senatûs (De M. P. c. 8). Aurelius Victor speaks very doubtfully of the faith of Diocletian towards his friends.

[99] *Truncatæ vires urbis, imminuto prætoriarum cohortium atque in armis vulgi numero.* Aurelius Victor [ib.]. Lactantius attributes to Galerius the prosecution of the same plan (c. 26).

[100] They were old corps stationed in Illyricum; and, according to the ancient establishment, they each consisted of six thousand men. They had acquired much reputation by the use of the *plumbatæ*, or darts loaded with lead. Each soldier carried five of these, which he darted from a considerable distance, with great strength and dexterity. See Vegetius, i. 17.

[101] See the Theodosian Code, l. vi. tit. ii. with Godefroy's commentary.

[102] See the 12th dissertation in Spanheim's excellent work *De Usu Numismatum*. From medals, inscriptions, and historians, he examines every title separately, and traces it from Augustus to the moment of its disappearing.

[103] Pliny (in Panegy. c. 3, 55, &c.) speaks of *Dominus* with execration, as synonymous to Tyrant, and opposite to Prince. And the same Pliny regularly gives that title (in the tenth book of his epistles) to his friend rather than master, the virtuous Trajan. This strange expression puzzles the commentators who think, and the translators who can write.

[104] Synesius de Regno, Edit. Petav. p. 15. I am indebted for this quotation to the Abbé de la Bléterie.

[105] See Van Dale de Consecratione, p. 534, &c. It was customary for the emperors to mention (in the preamble of laws) their *numen, sacred majesty, divine oracles, &c.* According to Tillemont, Gregory of Nazianzen complains most bitterly of the profanation, especially when it was practised by an Arian emperor. ["Gregory of Nazianzen" is as incorrect an expression as "Thomas of Aquinate" would be. The name of Gregory's birthplace is Nazianzus, so that he may be distinguished from his namesake of Nyssa, either as *Gregory of Nazianzus*, or as *Gregory Nazianzene*.]

[106] See Spanheim de Usu Numismat. Dissert. xii.

[107] [Aurelian wore the diadem (Aurel. Victor, Epit. 35, 5), and is styled *domino et deo* on coins. The senate was rigidly excluded from all share in the government; and the mark S.C. no longer appears on the copper coinage. He was popularly called "the schoolmaster of the senators." Thus Aurelian may be said to have begun the "absolutism," which Diocletian elaborated.]

[108] Aurelius Victor. Eutropius, ix. 26. It appears by the Panegyrist that the Romans were soon reconciled to the name and ceremony of adoration.

[109] The innovations introduced by Diocletian are chiefly deduced, — 1st, from some very strong passages in Lactantius; and 2dly, from the new and various offices, which, in the Theodosian code, appear *already* established in the beginning of the reign of Constantine. [It is only in some cases that we can distinguish with probability, and only in a few with certainty, between the work of Diocletian and that

of Constantine in organising the new constitution of the Empire. An editor must follow the author's judicious example and reserve his supplementary remarks for the fuller picture in chap. xvii.]

[110] [The consulate was in the fourth and fifth centuries the chief symbol of the theoretical unity of the Empire. Before the end of the fourth century the custom was established that one consul was appointed by the Eastern, the other by the Western, Augustus.]

[111] Lactant. de M. P. c. 7.

[112] *Indicta lex nova quæ sane illorum temporum modestiâ tolerabilis, in perniciem processit.* Aurel. Victor [Cæs. 39], who has treated the character of Diocletian with good sense, though in bad Latin.

[113] *Solus omnium post conditum Romanum Imperium, qui ex tanto fastigio sponte ad privatæ vitæ statum civilitatemque remearet.* Eutrop. ix. 28. [The expression of Eutropius is more accurate than that of Gibbon. We have an instance of an earlier resignation in the case of Ptolemy Sôtêr (abdicated 285, died 283, .)]

[114] The particulars of the journey and illness are taken from Lactantius (c. 17), who may *sometimes* be admitted as an evidence of public facts, though very seldom of private anecdotes.

[115] Aurelius Victor [ib.] ascribes the abdication, which had been so variously accounted for, to two causes: 1st, Diocletian's contempt of ambition; and 2dly, His apprehension of impending troubles. One of the panegyrists (vi. 9) mentions the age and infirmities of Diocletian as a very natural reason for his retirement. [His illness was doubtless the chief cause of his abdication.]

[116] The difficulties as well as mistakes attending the dates both of the year and of the day of Diocletian's abdication are perfectly cleared up by Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iv. p. 525, note 19, and by Pagi *ad annum*.

[117] See *Panegy. Veter.* vi. 9 [8]. The oration was pronounced after Maximian had reassumed the purple.

[118] Eumenius pays him a very fine compliment, "At enim divinum illum virum, qui primus imperium et participavit et posuit, consilii et facti sui non pœnitet; nec amisisse se putat quod sponte transcripsit. Felix beatusque vere quem vestra, tantorum principum, colunt obsequia privatam." *Panegy. Vet.* vii. 15.

[119] We are obliged to the younger Victor [Epit. 39] for this celebrated *bon mot*. Eutropius [ix. 28] mentions the thing in a more general manner.

[120] *Hist. August.* p. 223, 224 [xxvi. 43]. Vopiscus had learned this conversation from his father.

[121] The younger Victor [ib.] slightly mentions the report. But, as Diocletian had disoblged a powerful and successful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune. It has been affirmed that he died raving mad, that he was condemned as a criminal by the Roman senate, &c.

[122] See the Itiner. p. 269, 272, edit. Wessel.

[123] The Abate Fortis, in his *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, p. 43 (printed at Venice, in the year 1774, in two small volumes in quarto), quotes a MS. account of the antiquities of Salona, composed by Giambattista Giustiniani about the middle of the xvth century. [See Mr. Jackson's work on Dalmatia (cp. vol. 1. p. 28); and Mr. Freeman's essay in *Historical Essays*, 2nd series.]

[124] Adam's *Antiquities of Diocletian's Palace at Spalatro*, p. 6. We may add a circumstance or two from the Abate Fortis; the little stream of the Hyader, mentioned by Lucan, produces most exquisite trout, which a sagacious writer, perhaps a monk, supposes to have been one of the principal reasons that determined Diocletian in the choice of his retirement. Fortis, p. 45. The same author (p. 38) observes that a taste for agriculture is reviving at Spalatro; and that an experimental farm has lately been established near the city, by a society of gentlemen.

[125] Constantine. *Orat. ad Cœtum Sanct.* c. 25. In this sermon, the emperor, or the bishop who composed it for him, affects to relate the miserable end of all the persecutors of the church.

[126] Constantine. *Porphyr. de Statu Imper.* p. 86 [iii. p. 125, ed. Bonn].

[127] [Tragurium is the name; now Traù.]

[128] D'Anville, *Géographie Ancienne*, tom. i. p. 162.

[129] Messieurs Adam and Clerisseau, attended by two draughtsmen, visited Spalatro in the month of July, 1757. The magnificent work which their journey produced was published in London seven years afterwards.

[130] I shall quote the words of the Abate Fortis. "E' bastevolmente nota agli amatori dell' Architettura, e dell' Antichità, l'opera del Signor Adams, che a donato molto a que' superbi vestigi coll' abituale eleganza del suo toccalapis e del bulino. In generale la rozzezza del scalpello, e'l cattivo gusto del secolo vi gareggiano colla magnificenza del fabricato." See *Viaggio in Dalmazia*, p. 40.

[131] The orator Eumenius was secretary to the emperors Maximian and Constantius, and Professor of Rhetoric in the College of Autun. His salary was six hundred thousand sesterces, which, according to the lowest computation of that age, must have exceeded three thousand pounds a year. He generously requested the permission of employing it in rebuilding the college. See his *Oration De restaurandis scholis*; which, though not exempt from vanity, may atone for his panegyrics.

[132] Porphyry died about the time of Diocletian's abdication. The life of his master Plotinus, which he composed, will give us the most complete idea of the genius of the sect, and the manners of its professors. This very curious piece is inserted in Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*. tom. iv. p. 88-148 [and is included in the volume of Didot's library, which contains Diogenes Laertius].

[1] M. de Montesquieu (*Considérations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains*, c. 17) supposes, on the authority of Orosius and Eusebius, that, on this occasion, the empire, for the first time, was *really* divided into two parts. It is difficult, however, to discover in what respect the plan of Galerius differed from that of Diocletian.

[2] [See below, note 19.]

[3] Hic non modo amabilis, sed etiam venerabilis Gallis fuit; præcipue quòd Diocletiani suspectam prudentiam, et Maximiani sanguinariam violentiam imperio ejus evaserant. Eutrop. Breviar. x. i.

[4] Divitiis Provincialium (mel. *provinciarum*) ac privatorum studens, fisci commoda non admodum affectans; ducensque melius publicas opes a privatis haberi, quam intra unum claustrum reservari. Id. *ibid.* He carried this maxim so far, that whenever he gave an entertainment he was obliged to borrow a service of plate.

[5] Lactantius de Mort. Persecutor. c. 18. Were the particulars of this conference more consistent with truth and decency, we might still ask how they came to the knowledge of an obscure rhetorician. But there are many historians who put us in mind of the admirable saying of the great Condé to Cardinal de Retz: "Ces coquins nous font parler et agir, comme ils auroient fait eux-mêmes à notre place."

[6] [Galerius Valerius Maximinus.]

[7] Sublatus nuper a pecoribus et silvis (says Lactantius, de M. P. c. 19) statim Scutarius, continuo Protector, mox Tribunus, postridie Cæsar, accepit Orientem. Aurelius Victor is too liberal in giving him the whole portion of Diocletian.

[8] His diligence and fidelity are acknowledged even by Lactantius, de M. P. c. 18. [Name: Flavius Valerius Severus.]

[9] These schemes, however, rest only on the very doubtful authority of Lactantius, de M. P. c. 20.

[10] This tradition, unknown to the contemporaries of Constantine, was invented in the darkness of monasteries, was embellished by Jeffrey of Monmouth and the writers of the xiith century, has been defended by our antiquarians of the last age, and is seriously related in the ponderous history of England, compiled by Mr. Carte (vol. i. p. 147). He transports, however, the kingdom of Coil, the imaginary father of Helena, from Essex to the wall of Antoninus.

[11] Eutropius (x. 2) expresses, in a few words, the real truth, and the occasion of the error, "*ex obscuriori malrimonio ejus filius.*" Zosimus (l. ii. p. 78 [8]) eagerly seized

the most unfavourable report, and is followed by Orosius (vii. 25), whose authority is oddly enough overlooked by the indefatigable but partial Tillemont. By insisting on the divorce of Helena, Diocletian acknowledged her marriage.

[12] There are three opinions with regard to the place of Constantine's birth. 1. Our English antiquarians were used to dwell with rapture on the words of his panegyrist: "Britannias illic oriendo nobiles fecisti." But this celebrated passage may be referred with as much propriety to the accession as to the nativity of Constantine. 2. Some of the modern Greeks have ascribed the honour of his birth to Drepanum, a town on the gulf of Nicomedia (Cellarius, tom. ii. p. 174) which Constantine dignified with the name of Helenopolis and Justinian adorned with many splendid buildings (Procop. de Edificiis, v. 2). It is indeed probable enough that Helena's father kept an inn at Drepanum; and that Constantius might lodge there when he returned from a Persian embassy in the reign of Aurelian. But in the wandering life of a soldier, the place of his marriage, and the place where his children are born, have very little connection with each other. 3. The claim of Naissus is supported by the anonymous writer, published at the end of Ammianus, p. 710 [Anonymous Valesii, 2], and who in general copied very good materials; and it is confirmed by Julius Firmicus (de Astrologiâ, l. i. c. 4), who flourished under the reign of Constantine himself. [Mathesis was the name which the author himself, Julius Firmicus Maternus junior Siculus, gave to this work in eight Books.] Some objections have been raised against the integrity of the text, and the application, of the passage of Firmicus; but the former is established by the best MSS., and the latter is very ably defended by Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanâ, l. iv. c. 11, et Supplement.

[13] Literis minus instructus. Anonym. ad Ammian. p. 710 [2, 2 (edited by Gardthausen with Ammianus, ii. p. 280 *sqq.*)].

[14] Galerius, or perhaps his own courage, exposed him to single combat with a Sarmatian (Anonym. p. 710 [2, 3]) and with a monstrous lion. See Praxagoras apud Photium, p. 63 [F.H.G. iv. p. 2]. Praxagoras, an Athenian philosopher, had written a life of Constantine, in two books, which are now lost. He was a contemporary.

[15] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 78, 79 [8]. Lactantius de M. P. c. 24. The former tells a very foolish story, that Constantine caused all the post horses, which he had used, to be hamstrung. Such a bloody execution, without preventing a pursuit, would have scattered suspicions and might have stopped his journey. [The question arises why Constantine remained so long in the East as he did. Schiller thinks that it was Diocletian's purpose, one day to invest him with the purple. There is even numismatic evidence that he was recognised in Alexandria as Cæsar before the nomination of Severus. Schiller, ii. 167.]

[16] Anonym. p. 710 [2, 4]. Panegyri. Veter. vii. 4. But Zosimus, l. ii. p. 79 [9], Eusebius de Vit. Constan. l. i. c. 21, and Lactantius de M. P. c. 24 suppose, with less accuracy, that he found his father on his death-bed [cp. Aurel. Victor, Cæs. 40].

[17] [A metrical epitaph (which Rossi supposed to be on Constans), found in two MSS., has been vindicated for Constantius by Mommsen in Hermes, vol. xxviii.]

[18] Cunctis qui aderant annitentibus, sed præcipue Croco (*alii Eroco.*) Alamannorum Rege, auxilli gratiâ Constantium comitato, imperium capit. Victor Junior, [epit.] c. 41. This is perhaps the first instance of a barbarian king who assisted the Roman arms with an independent body of his own subjects. The practice grew familiar, and at last became fatal.

[19] [Spain was hardly in the dominion of Constantius, or of Constantine before his victory over Maxentius. It went at this time with Africa and Italy.]

[20] His panegyrist Eumenius (vii. 8) ventures to affirm, in the presence of Constantine, that he put spurs to his horse, and tried, but in vain, to escape from the hands of his soldiers.

[21] Lactantius de M. P. c. 25. Eumenius (vii. 8) gives a rhetorical turn to the whole transaction.

[22] The choice of Constantine by his dying father, which is warranted by reason, and insinuated by Eumenius, seems to be confirmed by the most unexceptionable authority, the concurring evidence of Lactantius (de M. P. c. 24) and of Libanius (Oration i.), of Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin, l. i. c. 18, 21) and of Julian (Oration i. [p. 7]).

[23] Of the three sisters of Constantine, Constantia married the emperor Licinius, Anastasia the Cæsar Bassianus, and Eutropia the consul Nepotianus. The three brothers were, Dalmatius, Julius Constantius, Annibalianus, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

[24] See Gruter Inscip. p. 178 [C. I. L. vi. 1130]. The six princes are all mentioned, Diocletian and Maximian as the senior Augusti and fathers of the emperors. They jointly dedicate, for the use of *their own* Romans, this magnificent edifice. The architects have delineated the ruins of these *Thermæ*; and the antiquarians, particularly Donatus and Nardini, have ascertained the ground which they covered. One of the great rooms is now the Carthusian church; and even one of the porter's lodges is sufficient to form another church, which belongs to the Feuillans.

[25] See Lactantius de M. P. c. 26, 31.

[26] [But as Cæsar, not as Augustus.]

[27] The vith Panegyric represents the conduct of Maximian in the most favourable light, and the ambiguous expression of Aurelius Victor, "retractante diu," may signify, either that he contrived, or that he opposed, the conspiracy. See Zosimus, l. ii. p. 79 [9] and Lactantius de M. P. c. 26.

[28] The circumstances of this war, and the death of Severus, are very doubtfully and variously told in our ancient fragments (see Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 555). I have endeavoured to extract from them a consistent and probable narration. [It is probable that the death of Severus was due to the orders of Maxentius,

not of Maximian. As to the mode of his death Gibbon follows Lactantius, de M. P. 26. Otherwise Zosimus, ii. 10. Date doubtful.]

[29] The vith Panegyric was pronounced to celebrate the elevation of Constantine; but the prudent orator avoids the mention either of Galerius or of Maxentius. He introduces only one slight allusion to the actual troubles, and to the majesty, of Rome. [The narrative in the text must be corrected in two respects. Following Lactantius the author has placed the first visit of Maximian to Gaul out of its proper order, and he has wholly omitted to mention the Congress of Carnuntum. Maximian was in Italy during the invasion of Galerius. The latter, when he retired, appealed to Diocletian, who consented to be present at a conclave at Carnuntum and exert his influence over Maximian Herculus, in order to maintain the system which he had himself instituted. The congress met in November, 307; Maximian and Galerius were present. Diocletian for the second time induced Maximian to abdicate, and the vacant throne of the Augustus was filled by Licinius (who had probably been made Cæsar shortly before this). Maxentius was entirely excluded from the succession. Maximian then (before the end of the year) paid his first visit to Constantine, who had probably already assumed the title of Augustus, which his father-in-law now confirmed. See Eutropius, x. 3. Socrates, Hist. Ecc. i. 2. Schiller, ii. 177.]

[30] With regard to this negotiation, see the fragments of an anonymous Historian, published by Valesius at the end of his edition of Ammianus Marcellinus, p. 711 [3, 7]. These fragments have furnished us with several curious, and as it should seem authentic, anecdotes.

[31] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28 [*leg.* 27]. The former of these reasons is probably taken from Virgil's Shepherd: "Illam . . . ego huic nostræ similem Melibœe putavi, &c." Lactantius delights in these poetical allusions.

[32]

Castra super Tusci si ponere Tybridis undas (*jubeas*),
Hesperios audax veniam metator in agros.
Tu quoscunque voles in planum effundere muros,
His aries actus disperget saxa lacertis;
Illa licet penitus tolli quam jusseris urbem
Roma sit.
—Lucan. Pharsal. i. 381.

[33] Lactantius de M. P. c. 27. Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [10]. The latter insinuates that Constantine, in his interview with Maximian, had promised to declare war against Galerius.

[34] [Valerius Licinianus Licinius.]

[35] M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part. i. p. 559) has proved that Licinius, without passing through the intermediate rank of Cæsar, was declared Augustus, the 11th of November, 307, after the return of Galerius from Italy. [It is

however possible and probable that Licinius was made Cæsar after the death of Severus.]

[36] Lactantius de M. P. c. 32. When Galerius declared Licinius Augustus with himself, he tried to satisfy his younger associates, by inventing for Constantine and *Maximin* (not *Maxentius*, see Baluze, p. 81) the new title of sons of the Augusti. But, when Maximin acquainted him that he had been saluted Augustus by the army, Galerius was obliged to acknowledge him, as well as Constantine, as equal associates in the Imperial dignity. [Date uncertain.]

[37] See Panegy. Vet. vi. 9. *Audi doloris nostri liberam vocem, &c.* The whole passage is imagined with artful flattery, and expressed with an easy flow of eloquence.

[38] Lactantius de M. P. c. 28. Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [11]. A report was spread, that Maxentius was the son of some obscure Syrian, and had been substituted by the wife of Maximian as her own child. See Aurelius Victor, Anonym. Valesian [3, 6], and Panegy. Vet. ix. 3, 4. [Maxentius declared himself sole Augustus in April, 308. See Chronogr. of 354, ed. Mommsen in Abh. of the Saxon Ges. der Wissensch. 1850, p. 628.] [See vol. i. Appendix 1.]

[39] *Ab urbe pulsum, ab Italia fugatum, ab Illyrico repudiatum, tuis provinciis, tuis copiis, tuo palatio recepisti.* Eumen. in Panegy. Vet. vii. 14.

[40] Lactantius de M. P. c. 29. Yet, after the resignation of the purple, Constantine still continued to Maximian the pomp and honours of the Imperial dignity; and on the public occasions gave the right-hand place to his father-in-law. Panegy. Vet. vii. 15.

[41] Zosim. l. ii. p. 82 [11]. Eumenius in Panegy. Vet. vii. 16-21. The latter of these has undoubtedly represented the whole affair in the most favourable light for his sovereign. Yet even from this partial narrative we may conclude that the repeated clemency of Constantine, and the reiterated treasons of Maximian, as they are described by Lactantius (de M. P. c. 29, 30) and copied by the moderns, are destitute of any historical foundation. [A hazardous conclusion.]

[42] Aurelius Victor, [Cæs.] c. 40. But that lake was situated on the Upper Pannonia, near the borders of Noricum; and the province of Valeria (a name which the wife of Galerius gave to the drained country) undoubtedly lay between the Drave and the Danube (Sextus Rufus, c. 9). I should therefore suspect that Victor has confounded the lake Pelso, with the Volocean marshes, or, as they are now called, the lake Sabaton. It is placed in the heart of Valeria, and its present extent is not less than 12 Hungarian miles (about 70 English) in length, and two in breadth. See Severini Pannonia, l. i. c. 9.

[43] Lactantius (de M. P. c. 33) and Eusebius ([Hist. Ecc.] l. viii. c. 16) describe the symptoms and progress of his disorder with singular accuracy and apparent pleasure.

[44] If any (like the late Dr. Jortin, Remarks of Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 307-356) still delight in recording the wonderful deaths of the persecutors, I would

recommend to their perusal an admirable passage of Grotius Hist. l. vii. p. 332) concerning the last illness of Philip II. of Spain.

[45] [He died at Sardica. Anon. Val. 3, 8. (Salona, Chron. Pasch.)]

[46] [But Maxentius was not recognised by the other three Augusti.]

[47] See Eusebius, l. ix. 6, 10. Lactantius de M. P. c. 36. Zosimus is less exact, and evidently confounds Maximian with Maximin.

[48] See the viiiith Panegy. in which Eumenius displays, in the presence of Constantine, the misery and the gratitude of the city of Autun.

[49] Eutropius, x. 2. Panegy. Veter. vii. 10, 11, 12. A great number of the French youth were likewise exposed to the same cruel and ignominious death.

[50] [Spain was also in the dominion of Maxentius. This is proved by the copper coins struck for him at Tarraco (and for his son Romulus). No coins were struck for him in Gaul and Britain.]

[51] Julian excludes Maxentius from the banquet of the Cæsars with abhorrence and contempt; and Zosimus (l. ii. p. 85 [14]) accuses him of every kind of cruelty and profligacy.

[52] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 83-85. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 40].

[53] The passage of Aurelius Victor [ib.] should be read in the following manner: *Primus instituto pessimo, munerum specie, Patres Oratoresque pecuniam conferre prodigenti sibi cogeret.*

[54] Panegy. Vet. ix. 3. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. viii. 14, et in Vit. Constant. i. 33, 34. Rufinus, c. 17. The virtuous matron, who stabbed herself to escape the violence of Maxentius, was a Christian, wife to the prefect of the city, and her name was Sophronia. It still remains a question among the casuists, whether, on such occasions, suicide is justifiable.

[55] *Prætorianis cædem vulgi quondam annueret*, is the vague expression of Aurelius Victor [ib.]. See more particular, though somewhat different, accounts of a tumult and massacre which happened at Rome, in Eusebius (l. viii. c. 14) and in Zosimus (l. ii. p. 84 [13]).

[56] See in the Panegyrics (ix. 14) a lively description of the indolence and vain pride of Maxentius. In another place [ix. 3], the orator observes that the riches which Rome had accumulated in a period of 1060 years were lavished by the tyrant on his mercenary bands; *redemptis ad civile latrocinium manibus ingesserat.*

[57] After the victory of Constantine, it was universally allowed that the motive of delivering the republic from a detested tyrant would, at any time, have justified his expedition into Italy. Euseb. in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 26. Panegy. Vet. ix. 2.

[58] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 84, 85 [14]. Nazarius in Panegyry. x. 7-13.

[59] See Panegyry. Vet. ix. 2. Omnibus fere tuis Comitibus et Ducibus non solum tacite mussantibus, sed etiam aperte timentibus; contra consilia hominum, contra Haruspicum monita, ipse per temet liberandæ urbis tempus venisse sentires. The embassy of the Romans is mentioned only by Zonaras (l. xiii. [1]) and by Cedrenus (in Compend. Hist. p. 270 [i. p. 474, ed. Bonn]): but those modern Greeks had the opportunity of consulting many writers which have since been lost, among which we may reckon the life of Constantine by Praxagoras. Photius (p. 63) has made a short extract from that historical work.

[60] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 86 [15]) has given us this curious account of the forces on both sides. He makes no mention of any naval armaments, though we are assured (Panegyry. Vet. ix. 25) that the war was carried on by sea as well as by land; and that the fleet of Constantine took possession of Sardinia, Corsica, and the ports of Italy.

[61] Panegyry. Vet. ix. 3. It is not surprising that the orator should diminish the numbers with which his sovereign achieved the conquest of Italy; but it appears somewhat singular, that he should esteem the tyrant's army at no more than 100,000 men.

[62] [*Twice superior* would probably be nearer the truth.]

[63] The three principal passages of the Alps between Gaul and Italy are those of Mount St. Bernard, Mount Cenis, and Mount Genevre. Tradition, and a resemblance of names (*Alpes Penninæ*), had assigned the first of these for the march of Hannibal (see Simler de Alpibus). The Chevalier de Folard (Polybe, tom. iv.) and M. d'Anville have led him over Mount Genevre. But, notwithstanding the authority of an experienced officer and a learned geographer, the pretensions of Mount Cenis are supported in a specious, not to say a convincing manner, by M. Grosley, Observations sur l'Italie, tom. i. p. 40, &c.

[64] La Brunette near Suse, Demont, Exiles, Fenestrelles, Coni, &c.

[65] See Ammian. Marcellin. xv. 10. His description of the roads over the Alps is clear, lively, and accurate.

[66] [This is not certain; some think, Mount Génèvre.]

[67] Zosimus as well as Eusebius hasten from the passage of the Alps to the decisive action near Rome. We must apply to the two Panegyrics for the intermediate actions of Constantine.

[68] The Marquis Maffei has examined the siege and battle of Verona with that degree of attention and accuracy which was due to a memorable action that happened in his native country. The fortifications of that city, constructed by Gallienus, were less extensive than the modern walls, and the Amphitheatre was not included within their circumference. See Verona Illustrata, part i. p. 142, 150.

[69] They wanted chains for so great a multitude of captives; and the whole council was at a loss; but the sagacious conqueror imagined the happy expedient of converting into fetters the swords of the vanquished. Panegy. Vet. ix. 11.

[70] Panegy. Vet. ix. 10.

[71] Literas calamitatum suarum indices supprimebat. Panegy. Vet. ix. 15.

[72] Remedia malorum potius quam mala differebat, is the fine censure which Tacitus passes on the supine indolence of Vitellius.

[73] The Marquis Maffei has made it extremely probable that Constantine was still at Verona, the 1st of September, 312, and that the memorable era of the Indictions was dated from his conquest of the Cisalpine Gaul.

[74] See Panegy. Vet. xi. 16 [*leg.* ix. 16]. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44.

[75] Illo die hostem Romanorum esse periturum. The vanquished prince became of course the enemy of Rome.

[76] See Panegy. Vet. ix. 16, x. 27. The former of these orators magnifies the hoards of corn, which Maxentius had collected from Africa and the islands. And yet, if there is any truth in the scarcity mentioned by Eusebius (in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 36), the Imperial granaries must have been open only to the soldiers.

[77] Maxentius . . . tandem urbe in *Saxa Rubra*, millia ferme novem ægerrime progressus. Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 40]. See Cellarius Geograph. Antiq. tom. i. p. 463. *Saxa Rubra* was in the neighbourhood of the *Cremera*, a trifling rivulet, illustrated by the valour and glorious death of the three hundred *Fabii*.

[78] The post which Maxentius had taken, with the Tiber in his rear, is very clearly described by the two Panegyrist, ix. 16, x. 28.

[79] Exceptis latrocinii illius primis auctoribus, qui, desperatâ veniâ, locum quem pugnæ sumpserant texere corporibus. Panegy. Vet. ix. 17.

[80] A very idle rumour soon prevailed, that Maxentius, who had not taken any precaution for his own retreat, had contrived a very artful snare to destroy the army of the pursuers; but that the wooden bridge, which was to have been loosened on the approach of Constantine, unluckily broke down under the weight of the flying Italians. M. de Tillemont (Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iv. part i. p. 576) very seriously examines whether, in contradiction to common sense, the testimony of Eusebius and Zosimus ought to prevail over the silence of Lactantius, Nazarius, and the anonymous, but contemporary orator, who composed the ninth Panegyric.

[81] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 86-88 [15-17], and the two Panegyrics, the former of which was pronounced a few months afterwards, afford the clearest notion of this great battle. Lactantius, Eusebius, and even the Epitomes, supply several useful hints.

[82] Zosimus, the enemy of Constantine, allows (l. ii. p. 88 [17]) that only a few of the friends of Maxentius were put to death, but we may remark the expressive passage of Nazarius (Panegy. Vet. x. 6): *Omnibus qui labefactare statum ejus poterant cum stirpe deletis*. The other orator (Panegy. Vet. ix. 20, 21) contents himself with observing that Constantine, when he entered Rome, did not imitate the cruel massacres of Cinna, of Marius, or of Sylla.

[83] See the two Panegyrics, and the laws of this and the ensuing year, in the Theodosian Code.

[84] Panegy. Vet. ix. 20. Lactantius de M. P. c. 44. Maximin, who was confessedly the eldest Cæsar, claimed, with some show of reason, the first rank among the Augusti.

[85] *Adhuc cuncta opera quæ magnifice construxerat, urbis fanum, atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere*. Aurelius Victor [ib.]. With regard to the theft of Trajan's trophies, consult Flaminius Vacca, apud Montfaucon, *Diarium Italicum*, p. 250, and *l'Antiquité Expliquée* of the latter, tom. iv. p. 171.

[86] *Prætoriarum legiones ac subsidia factionibus aptiora quam urbi Romæ, sublata penitus; simul arma atque usus indumenti militaris*. Aurelius Victor. Zosimus (l. 11, p. 89 [17]) mentions this fact as an historian; and it is very pompously celebrated in the ninth Panegyric.

[87] [This senatorial tax was known as the *follis* (also *gleba*, or *descriptio*). The senator had further to pay an *aurum oblativum* to the emperor on such festal occasions as the celebration of the Quinquennialia.]

[88] *Ex omnibus provinciis optimates viros Curiae tuæ pigneraveris; ut Senatûs dignitas . . . ex totius Orbis flore consisteret*. Nazarius in Panegy. Vet. x. 35. The word *pigneraveris* might almost seem maliciously chosen. Concerning the senatorial tax, see Zosimus, l. ii. p. 115 [38], the second title of the sixth book of the Theodosian Code, with Godefroy's Commentary, and *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxviii. p. 726.

[89] From the Theodosian Code, we may now begin to trace the motions of the emperors; but the dates both of time and place have frequently been altered by the carelessness of transcribers.

[90] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 89 [17]) observes that, before the war, the sister of Constantine had been betrothed to Licinius. According to the younger Victor, Diocletian was invited to the nuptials; but, having ventured to plead his age and infirmities, he received a second letter filled with reproaches for his supposed partiality to the cause of Maxentius and Maximin. [Epit. 39.]

[91] Zosimus mentions the defeat and death of Maximin as ordinary events; but Lactantius expatiates on them (de M. P. c. 45-50), ascribing them to the miraculous interposition of Heaven. Licinius at that time was one of the protectors of the church.

[92] Lactantius de M. P. c. 50. Aurelius Victor touches on the different conduct of Licinius, and of Constantine, in the use of victory.

[93] The sensual appetites of Maximin were gratified at the expense of his subjects. His eunuchs, who forced away wives and virgins, examined their naked charms with anxious curiosity, lest any part of their body should be found unworthy of the royal embraces. Coyness and disdain were considered as treason, and the obstinate fair one was condemned to be drowned. A custom was gradually introduced, that no person should marry a wife without the permission of the emperor, “ut ipse in omnibus nuptiis prægustator esset.” Lactantius de M. P. c. 38.

[94] Lactantius de M. P. c. 39.

[95] Diocletian at last sent cognatum suum, quendam militarem ac potentem virum, to intercede in favour of his daughter (Lactantius de M. P. c. 41). We are not sufficiently acquainted with the history of these times, to point out the person who was employed.

[96] Valeria quoque per varias provincias quindecim mensibus plebeio cultû pervagata. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. There is some doubt whether we should compute the fifteen months from the moment of her exile, or from that of her escape. The expression of *pervagata* seems to denote the latter; but in that case we must suppose that the treatise of Lactantius was written after the first civil war between Licinius and Constantine. See Cuper, p. 254.

[97] Ita illis pudicitia et conditio exitio fuit. Lactantius de M. P. c. 51. He relates the misfortunes of the innocent wife and daughter of Diocletian with a very natural mixture of pity and exultation.

[98] The curious reader, who consults the Valesian Fragment, p. 713, will perhaps accuse me of giving a bold and licentious paraphrase; but, if he considers it with attention, he will acknowledge that my interpretation is probable and consistent.

[99] The situation of Æmona, or as it is now called Laybach, in Carniola (d’Anville, Géographie Ancienne, tom. i. p. 187), may suggest a conjecture. As it lay to the north-east of the Julian Alps, that important territory became a natural object of dispute between the sovereigns of Italy and of Illyricum.

[100] Cibalis or Cibalæ [now Vinkovce] (whose name is still preserved in the obscure ruins of Swilei) was situated about fifty miles from Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, and about one hundred from Taurunum, or Belgrade, and the conflux of the Danube and the Save. The Roman garrisons and cities on those rivers are finely illustrated by M. d’Anville, in a memoir inserted in l’Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xxviii.

[101] Zosimus (l. ii. p. 90, 91 [18]) gives a very particular account of this battle; but the descriptions of Zosimus are rhetorical rather than military.

[102] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 92, 93 [19]. Anonym. Valesian. p. 713 [5; 17, 18]. The Epitomes furnish some circumstances; but they frequently confound the two wars between Licinius and Constantine.

[103] Petrus Patricius in the Excerpt. Legat. p. 27 [F.G.H. iv. p. 190]. If it should be thought that γάμβρος signifies more properly a son-in-law we might conjecture, that Constantine, assuming the name as well as the duties of a father, had adopted his younger brothers and sisters, the children of Theodora. But in the best authors γάμβρος sometimes signifies a husband, sometimes a father-in-law, and sometimes a kinsman in general. See Spanheim Observat. ad Julian. Orat. i. p. 72.

[104] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 93 [20]. Anonym. Valesian. p. 713. Eutropius, x. 5. Aurelius Victor. Euseb. in Chron. Sozomen. l. i. c. 2. Four of these writers affirm that the promotion of the Cæsars was an article of the treaty. It is however certain that the younger Constantine and Licinius were not yet born; and it is highly probable that the promotion was made the 1st of March, 317. The treaty had probably stipulated that two Cæsars might be created by the Western, and one only by the Eastern, emperor; but each of them reserved to himself the choice of the persons.

[105] Codex Theodosian. l. xi. tit. 27. tom. iv. p. 188, with Godefroy's observations. See likewise, l. v. tit. 7-8.

[106] Omnia foris placita, domi prospera, annonæ ubertate, fructuum copiâ, &c. Panegy. Vet. x. 38. This oration of Nazarius was pronounced on the day of the Quinquennalia of the Cæsars, the 1st of March, 321.

[107] See the edict of Constantine, addressed to the Roman people in the Theodosian Code, l. ix. tit. 24, tom. iii. p. 189. [Date: 320, April 1, Aquileia.]

[108] His son very fairly assigns the true reason of the repeal: "Ne sub specie atrocioris judicii aliqua in ulciscendo crimine dilatio nasceretur." Cod. Theod. tom. iii. p. 193.

[109] Eusebius (in Vitâ Constant. l. iii. c. 1) chooses to affirm that in the reign of his hero the sword of justice hung idle in the hands of the magistrates. Eusebius himself (l. iv. c. 29, 54) and the Theodosian Code will inform us that this excessive lenity was not owing to the want either of atrocious criminals or of penal laws.

[110] Nazarius in Panegy. Vet. x. [36]. The victory of Crispus over the Alemanni is expressed on some medals.

[111] See Zosimus, l. ii. p. 93, 94 [21]; though the narrative of that historian is neither clear nor consistent. The Panegyric of Optatianus (c. 23 [in Epigr. Vet. 1596, p. 355]) mentions the alliance of the Sarmatians with the Carpi and Getæ, and points out the several fields of battle. It is supposed that the Sarmatian games, celebrated in the month of November, derived their origin from the success of this war [and also the ludi Gothici, 9th February: *Corp. Inscr. Lat.* i. p. 386].

[112] In the Cæsars of Julian (p. 329. Commentaire de Spanheim, p. 252.) Constantine boasts that he had recovered the province (Dacia), which Trajan had subdued. But it is insinuated by Silenus that the conquests of Constantine were like the gardens of Adonis, which fade and wither almost the moment they appear.

[113] Jornandes de Rebus Geticis, c. 21. I know not whether we may entirely depend on his authority. Such an alliance has a very recent air, and scarcely is suited to the maxims of the beginning of the fourth century.

[114] Eusebius in Vit. Constantin. l. i. c. 8. This passage, however, is taken from a general declamation on the greatness of Constantine, and not from any particular account of the Gothic war.

[115] Constantinus tamen vir ingens, et omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparasset simul principatum totius orbis affectans, Licinio bellum intulit. Eutropius, x. 5. Zosimus, l. ii. p. 89 [18]. The reasons which they have assigned for the first civil war may, with more propriety, be applied to the second.

[116] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 94, 95 [22].

[117] Constantine was very attentive to the privileges and comforts of his fellow-veterans (Conveterani), as he now began to style them. See the Theodosian Code, l. vii. tit. 20, tom. ii. p. 419-429.

[118] Whilst the Athenians maintained the empire of the sea, their fleet consisted of three, and afterwards of four, hundred galleys of three ranks of oars, all completely equipped and ready for immediate service. The arsenal in the port of Piræus had cost the republic a thousand talents, about two hundred and sixteen thousand pounds. See Thucydides de Bel. Peloponn. l. ii. c. 13, and Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, c. 19.

[119] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 95, 96 [21 *sqq.*]. This great battle is described in the Valesian fragment (p. 714), in a clear though concise manner. “Licinius vero circum Hadrianopolin maximo exercitu latera ardui montis impleverat: illuc toto agmine Constantinus inflexit. Cum bellum terrâ marique traheretur, quamvis per arduum suis nitentibus, attamen disciplinâ militari et felicitate, Constantinus Licinii confusum et sine ordine gentem vicit exercitum; leviter femore sauciatus.”

[120] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 97, 98 [24]. The current always sets out of the Hellespont; and, when it is assisted by a north wind, no vessel can attempt the passage. A south wind renders the force of the current almost imperceptible. See Tournefort’s Voyage au Levant, Let. xi.

[121] Aurelius Victor [Cæs. 41]. Zosimus, l. ii. p. 98 [25]. According to the latter, Martinianus was Magister Officiorum (he uses the Latin appellation in Greek). Some medals [struck at Nicomedia] seem to intimate that during his short reign he received the title of Augustus.

[122] Eusebius (in Vitâ Constantin. l. ii. c. 16, 17) ascribes this decisive victory to the pious prayers of the emperor. The Valesian fragment (p. 714) mentions a body of Gothic auxiliaries, under their chief Aliquaca, who adhered to the party of Licinius.

[123] Zosimus, l. ii. p. 102 [28]. Victor Junior in Epitome [41]. Anonym. Valesian. p. 714.

[124] *Contra religionem sacramenti Thessalonicae privatus occisus est.* Eutropius x. 6; and his evidence is confirmed by St. Jerome (in *Chronic.*) as well as by Zosimus, l. ii. p. 102 [28]. The Valesian writer is the only one who mentions the soldiers, and it is Zonaras alone [xiii. 1] who calls in the assistance of the senate. Eusebius prudently slides over this delicate transaction. But Sozomen, a century afterwards, ventures to assert the treasonable practices of Licinius.

[125] See the Theodosian Code, l. xv. tit. 15, tom. v. p. 404, 405. These edicts of Constantine betray a degree of passion and precipitancy very unbecoming of the character of a lawgiver.

[1] *Dum Assyrios penes, Medosque, et Persas Oriens fuit, despectissima pars servientium.* Tacit. Hist. v. 8. Herodotus, who visited Asia whilst it obeyed the last of those empires, slightly mentions the Syrians of Palestine, who, according to their own confession, had received from Egypt the rite of circumcision. See l. ii. c. 104.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, l. xl. [2 *sqq.*]. Dion Cassius, l. xxxvii. p. 121 [c. 17]. Tacit. Hist. v. 1-9. Justin, xxxvi. 2, 3.

[3]

Tradidit arcano quæcunque volumine Moses.
Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.

[Juvenal, xiv. 102.]

The letter of this law is not to be found in the present volume of Moses. But the wise, the humane Maimonides openly teaches that, if an idolater fall into the water, a Jew ought not to save him from instant death. See Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs*, l. vi. c. 28.

[4] A Jewish sect, which indulged themselves in a sort of occasional conformity, derived from Herod, by whose example and authority they had been seduced, the name of Herodians. But their numbers were so inconsiderable, and their duration so short, that Josephus has not thought them worthy of his notice. See Prideaux's *Connection*, vol. ii. p. 285.

[5] Cicero pro Flacco, c. 28.

[6] Philo de Legatione. Augustus left a foundation for a perpetual sacrifice. Yet he approved of the neglect which his grandson Caius expressed towards the temple of Jerusalem. See Sueton. in August. c. 93, and Casaubon's notes on that passage.

[7] See, in particular, Joseph. *Antiquitat.* xvii. 6 [§ 2], xviii. 3, and de Bel. Judaic. i. 33 [§ 2 *sqq.*], and ii. 9 [§ 2, 3]. Edit. Havercamp.

[8] *Jussi a Caio Cæsare, effigiem ejus in templo locare arma potius sumpsere.* Tacit. Hist. v. 9. Philo and Josephus gave a very circumstantial, but a very rhetorical, account of this transaction, which exceedingly perplexed the governor of Syria. At the first mention of this idolatrous proposal, King Agrippa fainted away, and did not recover his senses till the third day.

[9] For the enumeration of the Syrian and Arabian deities, it may be observed that Milton has comprised, in one hundred and thirty very beautiful lines, the two large and learned syntagmas which Selden had composed on that abstruse subject.

[10] “How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they *believe* me, for all the *signs* which I have shewn among them?” (Numbers, xiv. 11). It would be easy, but it would be unbecoming, to justify the complaint of the Deity, from the whole tenor of the Mosaic history.

[11] All that relates to the Jewish proselytes has been very ably treated by Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, l. vi. c. 6, 7.

[12] See Exod. xxiv. 23, Deut. xvi. 16, the commentators, and a very sensible note in the *Universal History*, vol. i. p. 603, edit. fol.

[13] When Pompey, using or abusing the right of conquest, entered into the Holy of Holies, it was observed with amazement, “Nullâ intus Deûm effigie, vacuum sedem et inania arcana.” Tacit. *Hist.* v. 9. It was a popular saying, with regard to the Jews, Nil præter nubes et cæli numen adorant.

[14] A second kind of circumcision was inflicted on a Samaritan or Egyptian proselyte. The sullen indifference of the Talmudists, with respect to the conversion of strangers, may be seen in Basnage, *Histoire des Juifs* l. vi. c. 6.

[15] These arguments were urged with great ingenuity by the Jew Orobio, and refuted with equal ingenuity and candour by the Christian Limborch. See the *Amica Collatio* (it well deserves that name) or account of the dispute between them.

[16] Jesus . . . circumcisis erat; cibus utebatur Judaicis; vestitû simili; purgatos scabie mittebat ad sacerdotes; Paschata et alios dies festos religiose observabat: si quos sanavit sabbato, ostendit non tantum ex lege, sed et ex receptis sententiis talia opera sabbato non interdicta. Grotius de *veritate Religionis Christianæ*, l. v. c. 7. A little afterwards (c. 12) he expatiates on the condescension of the apostles.

[17] Pæne omnes Christum Deum sub legis observatione credebant. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. See Eusebius, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* l. iv. c. 5.

[18] Mosheim de *Rebus Christianis ante Constantinum Magnum*, p. 153. In this masterly performance, which I shall often have occasion to quote, he enters much more fully into the state of the primitive church than he has an opportunity of doing in his *General History*.

[19] Eusebius, l. iii. c. 5. Le Clerc, *Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 605. [They retired before the capture.] During this occasional absence, the bishop and church of Pella still retained the title of Jerusalem. In the same manner, the Roman pontiffs resided seventy years at Avignon; and the patriarchs of Alexandria have long since transferred their episcopal seat to Cairo. [The Nazarenes still exist in the vicinity of Bussorah in Southern Babylonia. They are generally known as Mandæans. See W. Brandt, *Die*

mandäische Religion, 1889; and Kessler's articles on Mandæans in *Encycl. Britann.*, and in Herzog and Plitt's *Encyclopädie*.]

[20] Dion Cassius, l. lxxix. [12]. The exile of the Jewish nation from Jerusalem is attested by Aristo of Pella (apud Euseb. l. iv. c. 6), and is mentioned by several ecclesiastical writers; though some of them too hastily extend this interdiction to the whole country of Palestine.

[21] Eusebius, l. iv. c. 6. Sulpicius Severus, ii. 31. By comparing their unsatisfactory accounts, Mosheim (p. 327, &c.) has drawn out a very distinct representation of the circumstances and motives of this revolution.

[22] Le Clerc (*Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 477, 535) seems to have collected from Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and other writers, all the principal circumstances that relate to the Nazarenes, or Ebionites. The nature of their opinions soon divided them into a stricter and a milder sect; and there is some reason to conjecture that the family of Jesus Christ remained members, at least, of the latter and more moderate party. [The earliest mention of the Ebionites is in Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* i. 22. The earlier Ebionites (= Nazarenes) must be distinguished from the later, Gnostic Ebionites. For the former see the anti-heretical treatises of Tertullian and Hippolytus, for the latter that of Epiphanius.]

[23] Some writers have been pleased to create an Ebion, the imaginary author of their sect and name. But we can more safely rely on the learned Eusebius than on the vehement Tertullian or the credulous Epiphanius. According to Le Clerc, the Hebrew word *Ebjonim* may be translated into Latin by that of *Pauperes*. See *Hist. Ecclesiast.* p. 477. [The name was assumed by themselves in reference to the poverty of their condition; the Fathers contemptuously referred it to their understanding.]

[24] See the very curious Dialogue of Justin Martyr with the Jew Tryphon. The conference between them was held at Ephesus, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and about twenty years after the return of the church of Pella to Jerusalem. For this date consult the accurate note of Tillemont, *Mémoires Ecclésiastiques*, tom. ii. p. 511.

[25] Of all the systems of Christianity, that of Abyssinia is the only one which still adheres to the Mosaic rites (Geddes's *Church History of Æthiopia*, and dissertations de La Grand sur la Relation du P. Lobo). The eunuch of the queen Candace might suggest some suspicions; but, as we are assured (Socrates, i. 19, Sozomen, ii. 24, Ludolphus [*Hist. Eth.*], p. 281) that the Æthiopians were not converted till the fourth century, it is more reasonable to believe that they respected the Sabbath, and distinguished the forbidden meats, in imitation of the Jews, who, in a very early period, were seated on both sides of the Red Sea. Circumcision had been practised by the most ancient Æthiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness, which seem to be explained in the *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains*, tom. ii. p. 117. [Cp. Art. "Ethiopic Church" in *Dict. Chr. Biography*.]

[26] Beausobre, *Histoire du Manichéisme*, l. i. c. 3, has stated their objections, particularly those of Faustus, the adversary of Augustin, with the most learned

impartiality. [Perhaps the best introduction to the study of Gnosticism (and of Ebionism) is the work of R. A. Lipsius, *Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*, and his article on Gnosticismus in Ersch and Gruber's *Encyclopædia*. The theories of Harnack and Hilgenfeld as to the origin of Gnosticism are briefly stated in App. 2. The chief sources for early Gnosticism are: Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* (esp. for the Valentinian heresy), Tertullian, *Adv. Hær.* (esp. for Marcionism), and two works of Hippolytus, of which (a) "Against all Heresies" is formally lost, but has been practically restored, by the ingenuity of Lipsius, from citations of later writers; and (b) the "Refutation of all Heresies," of which the greater part was recovered in this century, in a MS. found on Mount Athos (the authorship of Hippolytus was finally proved by Döllinger); which discovery led to the identification of the *Philosophumena* (of "Pseudo-Origen") as the first book of the same treatise. It is to be observed that both Irenæus and Hippolytus apply the word Gnostic in a wide sense to a whole class of cognate views, not (like Epiphanius) to a special sect; Hippolytus, however, chiefly uses it of the Ophites and Syrian Gnostics.]

[27] *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu: adversus omnes alios hostile odium.* Tacit. Hist. v. 4. Surely Tacitus had seen the Jews with too favourable an eye. The perusal of Josephus must have destroyed the antithesis.

[28] Dr. Burnet (*Archæologia*, l. ii. c. 7) has discussed the first chapters of Genesis with too much wit and freedom.

[29] The milder Gnostics considered Jehovah, the Creator, as a Being of a mixed nature between God and the Dæmon. Others confounded him with the evil principle. Consult the second century of the general history of Mosheim, which gives a very distinct, though concise, account of their strange opinions on this subject.

[30] See Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, l. i. c. 4. Origen and St. Augustin were among the Allegorists.

[31] Hegesippus, ap. Euseb. l. iii. 32, iv. 22. Clemens, *Alexandrin. Stromat.* vii. 17.

[32] [It is not necessary to suppose that Gnosticism is referred to in the first Epistle to Timothy, *ad fin.*]

[33] In the account of the Gnostics of the second and third centuries, Mosheim is ingenious and candid; Le Clerc dull, but exact; Beausobre almost always an apologist; and it is much to be feared that the primitive fathers are very frequently calumniators. [Gnosticism originated in Syria, and entered upon a second stage when it passed to Egypt, and came under the influence of Greek philosophy (Basilides, for instance, was affected by the doctrines of the Stoics, Valentinus by Platonism). A later development is presented in the treatise *Pistis Sophia*, a precious relic of Gnostic literature, preserved in Coptic, edited by Schwartze and Petermann, with Latin translation, in 1851. See Appendix 11.]

[34] See the catalogues of Irenæus and Epiphanius. It must indeed be allowed that those writers were inclined to multiply the number of sects which opposed the *unity* of the church.

[35] Eusebius, l. iv. c. 15. So Zomen, l. ii. c. 32. See in Bayle, in the article of *Marcion*, a curious detail of a dispute on that subject. It should seem that some of the Gnostics (the Basilidians) declined, and even refused, the honour of martyrdom. Their reasons were singular and abstruse. See Mosheim, p. 359.

[36] See a very remarkable passage of Origen (Proem. ad Lucam). That indefatigable writer, who had consumed his life in the study of the scriptures, relies for their authenticity on the inspired authority of the church. It was impossible that the Gnostics could receive our present gospels, many parts of which (particularly in the resurrection of Christ) are directly, and as it might seem designedly, pointed against their favourite tenets. It is therefore somewhat singular that Ignatius (Epist. ad Smyrn. Patr. Apostol. tom. ii. p. 34 [§iii. 2]) should choose to employ a vague and doubtful tradition, instead of quoting the certain testimony of the evangelists.

[37] *Faciunt favos et vespæ; faciunt ecclesias et Marcionitæ*, is the strong expression of Tertullian, which I am obliged to quote from memory. [Adv. Marc. iv. 5.] In the time of Epiphanius (advers. Hæreses, p. 302), the Marcionites were very numerous in Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, and Persia.

[38] Augustin is a memorable instance of this gradual progress from reason to faith. He was, during several years, engaged in the Manichæan sect.

[39] The unanimous sentiment of the primitive church is very clearly explained by Justin Martyr, Apolog. Major [c. 25], by Athenagoras Legat. c. 22 [25. *πρεσβεία παρ? Χριστιανω?ν* is the title: best ed. by E. Schwartz, 1891], &c., and by Lactantius, Institut. Divin. ii. 14-19. [See also Athanasius de incarn. v. 47.]

[40] Tertullian (Apolog. c. 23 [22]) alleges the confession of the Dæmons themselves as often as they were tormented by the Christian exorcists.

[41] Tertullian has written a most severe treatise against idolatry, to caution his brethren against the hourly danger of incurring that guilt. *Recogita silvam, et quantæ latitant spinæ*. De Coronâ Militis, c. 10.

[42] The Roman senate was always held in a temple or consecrated place (Aulus Gellius, xiv. 7). Before they entered on business, every senator dropped some wine and frankincense on the altar. Sueton. in August. c. 35.

[43] See Tertullian, De Spectaculis. This severe reformer shews no more indulgence to a tragedy of Euripides than to a combat of gladiators. The dress of the actors particularly offends him. By the use of the lofty buskin, they impiously strive to add a cubit to their stature, c. 23. [Cp. Nöldechen, Z. f. Kirchengesch. xv. 1895, 161 *sqq.*]

[44] The ancient practice of concluding the entertainment with libations may be found in every classic. Socrates and Seneca, in their last moments, made a noble application

of this custom. Postquam [*leg.* postremo] stagnum calidæ aquæ introiit, respergens proximos servorum, additâ voce, libare se liquorem illum Jovi Liberatori, Tacit. Annal. xv. 64.

[45] See the elegant but idolatrous hymn of Catullus, on the nuptials of Manlius and Julia. O Hymen, Hymenæe iö! Quis huic Deo compararier ausit?

[46] The ancient funerals (in those of Misenus and Pallas) are no less accurately described by Virgil than they are illustrated by his commentator Servius. The pile itself was an altar, the flames were fed with the blood of victims, and all the assistants were sprinkled with lustral water.

[47] Tertullian de Idololatria, c. 11.

[48] See every part of Montfaucon's Antiquities. Even the reverses of the Greek and Roman coins were frequently of an idolatrous nature. Here indeed the scruples of the Christian were suspended by a stronger passion.

[49] Tertullian de Idoloatria, c. 20, 21, 22. If a Pagan friend (on the occasion perhaps of sneezing) used the familiar expression of "Jupiter bless you," the Christian was obliged to protest against the divinity of Jupiter.

[50] Consult the most laboured work of Ovid, his imperfect *Fasti*. He finished no more than the first six months of the year. The compilation of Macrobius is called the *Saturnalia*, but it is only a small part of the first book that bears any relation to the title.

[51] Tertullian has composed a defence, or rather panegyric, of the rash action of a Christian soldier who, by throwing away his crown of laurel, had exposed himself and his brethren to the most imminent danger. By the mention of the *emperors* (Severus and Caracalla) it is evident, notwithstanding the wishes of M. de Tillemont, that Tertullian composed his treatise *De Coronâ* long before he was engaged in the errors of the Montanists. See *Mémoires Ecclesiastiques*, tom. iii. p. 384. [Date rather 211; he joined Montanists, 207. Cp. Nöldechen, *Brieger's Ztschr. f. Kirchengeschichte*, xi. 1890, p. 352 *sqq.*]

[52] In particular, the first book of the *Tusculan Questions*, and the treatise *De Senectute*, and the *Somnium Scipionis* contain, in the most beautiful language, everything that Grecian philosophy, or Roman good sense, could possibly suggest on this dark but important object.

[53] The pre-existence of human souls, so far at least as that doctrine is compatible with religion, was adopted by many of the Greek and Latin fathers. See Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, l. vi. c. 4.

[54] See Cicero pro Cluent. c. 61. Cæsar ap. Sallust. de Bell. Catilin. c. 50. Juvenal. Satir. ii. 149.

Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna,
.....

Nec pueri creount, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.

[55] The xith book of the Odyssey gives a very dreary and incoherent account of the infernal shades. Pindar and Virgil have embellished the picture; but even those poets, though more correct than their great model, are guilty of very strange inconsistencies. See Bayle, Responses aux Questions d'un Provincial, part iii. c. 22.

[56] See the xvth epistle of the first book of Horace, the xiiiith Satire of Juvenal, and the iid Satire of Persius: these popular discourses express the sentiment and language of the multitude.

[57] If we confine ourselves to the Gauls, we may observe that they entrusted, not only their lives, but even their money, to the security of another world. *Vetus ille mos Gallorum occurrit* (says Valerius Maximus, l. ii. c. 6, p. 10), *quos, memoria proditum est, pecunias mutuas, quæ his apud inferos redderentur, dare solitos*. The same custom is more darkly insinuated by Mela, l. iii. c. 2. It is almost needless to add that the profits of trade hold a just proportion to the credit of the merchant, and that the Druids derived from their holy profession a character of responsibility which could scarcely be claimed by any other order of men.

[58] The right reverend author of the Divine Legation of Moses assigns a very curious reason for the omission, and most ingeniously retorts it on the unbelievers.

[59] See Le Clerc (*Prolegomena ad Hist. Ecclesiast. sect. 1, c. 8*). His authority seems to carry the greater weight, as he has written a learned and judicious commentary on the books of the Old Testament.

[60] Joseph. *Antiquitat. l. xiii. c. 10. De Bell. Jud. ii. 8*. According to the most natural interpretation of his words, the Sadducees admitted only the Pentateuch; but it has pleased some modern critics to add the prophets to their creed, and to suppose that they contented themselves with rejecting the traditions of the Pharisees. Dr. Jortin has argued that point in his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 103*.

[61] This expectation was countenanced by the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and by the first epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. Erasmus removes the difficulty by the help of allegory and metaphor; and the learned Grotius ventures to insinuate that, for wise purposes, the pious deception was permitted to take place.

[62] See Burnet's *Sacred Theory, part iii. c. 5*. This tradition may be traced as high as the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, who wrote in the first century, and who seems to have been half a Jew.

[63] The primitive church of Antioch computed almost 6000 years from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. Africanus, Lactantius, and the Greek church have reduced that number to 5500, and Eusebius has contented himself with 5200 years. These calculations were formed on the Septuagint, which was universally received during the six first centuries. The authority of the Vulgate and of the Hebrew text has determined the moderns, Protestants as well as Catholics, to prefer a period of about

4000 years; though, in the study of profane antiquity, they often find themselves straitened by those narrow limits. [Cp. App. 12.]

[64] Most of these pictures were borrowed from a misinterpretation of Isaiah, Daniel, and the Apocalypse. One of the grossest images may be found in Irenæus (l. 5, p. 455 [c. 33]), the disciple of Papias, who had seen the apostle St. John.

[65] See the second dialogue of Justin with Tryphon and the seventh book of Lactantius. It is unnecessary to allege all the intermediate fathers, as the fact is not disputed. Yet the curious reader may consult Daillé de Usu Patrum, l. iii. c. 4.

[66] The testimony of Justin, of his own faith and that of his orthodox brethren, in the doctrine of a Millennium, is delivered in the clearest and most solemn manner (Dialog. cum. Tryphonte Jud. p. 177, 178, edit. Benedictin.). If in the beginning of this important passage there is anything like an inconsistency, we may impute it, as we think proper, either to the author or to his transcribers.

[67] Dupin, Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique, tom. i. p. 223, tom. ii. p. 366, and Mosheim, p. 720; though the latter of these learned divines is not altogether candid on this occasion.

[68] In the Council of Laodicea (about the year 360) the Apocalypse was tacitly excluded from the sacred canon, by the same churches of Asia to which it is addressed; and we may learn from the complaint of Sulpicius Severus that their sentence had been ratified by the greater number of Christians of his time. From what causes, then, is the Apocalypse at present so generally received by the Greek, the Roman, and the Protestant churches? The following ones may be assigned. 1. The Greeks were subdued by the authority of an impostor who, in the sixth century, assumed the character of Dionysius the Areopagite. 2. A just apprehension, that the grammarians might become more important than the theologians, engaged the Council of Trent to fix the seal of their infallibility on all the books of Scripture, contained in the Latin Vulgate, in the number of which the Apocalypse was fortunately included (Fra Paolo, Istoria del Concilio Tridentino, l. ii.). 3. The advantage of turning those mysterious prophecies against the See of Rome inspired the Protestants with uncommon veneration for so useful an ally. See the ingenious and elegant discourses of the present bishop of Lichfield on that unpromising subject. [It may be considered certain that the Apocalypse of "John" was composed under Domitian (as Mommsen holds), to whose persecution of Christians there are allusions. But there is nothing in the work to show that it was written by the author of the Gospel.]

[69] Lactantius (Institut. Divin. vii. 15, &c.) relates the dismal tale of futurity with great spirit and eloquence.

[70] On this subject every reader of taste will be entertained with the third part of Burnet's Sacred Theory. He blends philosophy, scripture, and tradition into one magnificent system, in the description of which he displays a strength of fancy not inferior to that of Milton himself.

[71] And yet, whatever may be the language of individuals, it is still the public doctrine of all the Christian churches; nor can even our own refuse to admit the conclusions which must be drawn from the viiith and the xviiith of her Articles. The Jansenists, who have so diligently studied the works of the fathers, maintain this sentiment with distinguished zeal; and the learned M. de Tillemont never dismisses a virtuous emperor without pronouncing his damnation. Zuinglius is perhaps the only leader of a party who has ever adopted the milder sentiment, and he gave no less offence to the Lutherans than to the Catholics. See Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, l. ii. c. 19-22.

[72] Justin and Clemens of Alexandria allow that some of the philosophers were instructed by the Logos; confounding its double signification of the human reason and of the Divine Word.

[73] Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, c. 30. In order to ascertain the degree of authority which the zealous African had acquired, it may be sufficient to allege the testimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the Western churches. (See Prudent. Hymn. xiii. 100.) As often as he applied himself to his daily study of the writings of Tertullian, he was accustomed to say, "*Da mihi magistrum*; Give me my master." (Hieronym. de *Viris Illustribus*, tom. i. p. 284 [c. 53; leg. *da magistrum*].)

[74] Notwithstanding the evasions of Dr. Middleton, it is impossible to overlook the clear traces of visions and inspiration, which may be found in the apostolic fathers.

[75] Irenæus adv. Hæres. Proem. p. 3. Dr. Middleton (*Free Inquiry*, p. 96, &c.) observes that, as this pretension of all others was the most difficult to support by art, it was the soonest given up. The observation suits his hypothesis.

[76] Athenagoras in *Legatione*. Justin Martyr, *Cohort. ad Gentes*. Tertullian advers. Marcionit. l. iv. These descriptions are not very unlike the prophetic fury for which Cicero (*de Divinat.* ii. 54) expresses so little reverence.

[77] Tertullian (*Apolog.* c. 23) throws out a bold defiance to the Pagan magistrates. Of the primitive miracles, the power of exorcising is the only one which has been assumed by Protestants.

[78] Irenæus adv. Hæreses, l. ii. 56, 57; l. v. c. 6. Mr. Dodwell (*Dissertat. ad Irenæum*, ii. 42) concludes that the second century was still more fertile in miracles than the first.

[79] Theophilus ad Autolyicum, l. i. p. 345. Edit. Benedictin. Paris, 1742 [c. 13; ed. Migne, vol. 7, p. 1041.]

[80] Dr. Middleton sent out his *Introduction* in the year 1747, published his *Free Inquiry* in 1749, and before his death, which happened in 1750, he had prepared a vindication of it against his numerous adversaries.

[81] The university of Oxford conferred degrees on his opponents. From the indignation of Mosheim (p. 221), we may discover the sentiments of Lutheran divines.

[82] It may seem somewhat remarkable that Bernard of Clairvaux, who records so many miracles of his friend St. Malachi, never takes any notice of his own, which, in their turn, however, are carefully related by his companions and disciples. In the long series of ecclesiastical history, does there exist a single instance of a saint asserting that he himself possessed the gift of miracles?

[83] The conversion of Constantine is the era which is most usually fixed by Protestants. The more rational divines are unwilling to admit the miracles of the fourth, whilst the more credulous are unwilling to reject those of the fifth century.

[84] The imputations of Celsus and Julian, with the defence of the fathers, are very fairly stated by Spanheim, *Commentaire sur les Césars de Julian*, p. 468.

[85] Plin. Epist. x. 97.

[86] Tertullian, *Apolog.* c. 44. He adds, however, with some degree of hesitation, “Aut si [et] aliud, jam non Christianus.”

[87] The philosopher Peregrinus (of whose life and death Lucian has left us so entertaining an account) imposed, for a long time, on the credulous simplicity of the Christians of Asia.

[88] See a very judicious treatise of Barbeyrac *sur la Morale des Pères*.

[89] Lactant. *Institut. Divin.* l. vi. c. 20, 21, 22.

[90] Consult a work of Clemens of Alexandria, entitled the *Pædagogus*, which contains the rudiments of ethics, as they were taught in the most celebrated of the Christian schools.

[91] Tertullian, *de Spectaculis*, c. 23. Clemens Alexandrin. *Pædagog.* l. iii. c. 8.

[92] Beausobre, *Hist. Critique du Manichéisme*, l. vii. c. 3. Justin, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustin, &c., strongly inclined to this opinion.

[93] Some of the Gnostic heretics were more consistent; they rejected the use of marriage.

[94] See a chain of tradition, from Justin Martyr to Jerome, in the *Morale des Pères*; c. iv. 6-26.

[95] See a very curious Dissertation on the Vestals, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. iv. p. 161-227. Notwithstanding the honours and rewards which were bestowed on those virgins, it was difficult to procure a sufficient number; nor could the dread of the most horrible death always restrain their incontinence.

[96] Cupiditatem procreandi aut unam scimus aut nullam. Minucius Felix, c. 31. Justin. Apolog. Major [29]. Athenagoras in Legat. c. 28. Ter tullian de Cultu Femin. l. ii.

[97] Eusebius, l. vi. 8. Before the fame of Origen had excited envy and persecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than censured. As it was his general practice to allegorise scripture, it seems unfortunate that, in this instance only, he should have adopted the literal sense.

[98] Cyprian Epist. 4, and Dodwell Dissertat. Cyprianic. iii. Something like this rash attempt was long afterwards imputed to the founder of the order of Fontevrault. Bayle has amused himself and his readers on that very delicate subject.

[99] Dupin (Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique, tom. i. p. 195) gives a particular account of the dialogue of the ten virgins, as it was composed by Methodius, bishop of Tyre. The praises of virginity are excessive.

[100] The Ascetics (as early as the second century) made a public profession of mortifying their bodies, and of abstaining from the use of flesh and wine. Mosheim, p. 310.

[101] See the Morale des Pères. The same patient principles have been revived since the Reformation by the Socinians, the modern Anabaptists, and the Quakers. Barclay, the apologist of the Quakers, has protected his brethren by the authority of the primitive Christians, p. 542-549.

[102] Tertullian, Apolog. c. 21, De Idololatriâ, c. 17, 18. Origen contra Celsum, l. v. p. 253, [p. 1232, Migne, Patr. G. xi.,] l. vii. p. 348, [1457,] l. viii. p. 423-428, [1620, *sqq.*].

[103] Tertullian (De Coronâ Militis, c. 11) suggests to them the expedient of deserting; a counsel which, if it had been generally known, was not very proper to conciliate the favour of the emperors towards the Christian sect.

[104] As well as we can judge from the mutilated representation of Origen (l. viii. p. 423 [1620]), his adversary, Celsus, had urged his objection with great force and candour.

[105] The aristocratical party in France, as well as in England, has strenuously maintained the divine origin of bishops. But the Calvinistical presbyters were impatient of a superior; and the Roman Pontiff refused to acknowledge an equal. See Fra Paolo.

[106] In the history of the Christian hierarchy, I have, for the most part, followed the learned and candid Mosheim.

[107] For the prophets of the primitive church, see Mosheim, Dissertationes ad Hist. Eccles. pertinentes, tom. ii. p. 132-208.

[108] See the Epistles of St. Paul, and of Clemens, to the Corinthians.

[109] Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, l. vii. [On bishops and presbyters, see Appendix 13.]

[110] See Jerome ad Titum, c. 1, and Epistol. 85 (in the Benedictine edition, 101), and the elaborate apology of Blondel, pro sententiâ Hieronymi. The ancient state, as it is described by Jerome, of the bishop and presbyters of Alexandria receives a remarkable confirmation from the patriarch Eutychius (Annal. tom. i. p. 330, Vers. Pocock), whose testimony I know not how to reject, in spite of all the objections of the learned Pearson in his Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, part i. c. 11. [If Ignatius suffered under Trajan, and the Epistles ascribed to him are genuine, it would follow that episcopal government was fully organised in some churches in the East at the beginning of the second century, for those documents assume the institution. See vol. iii. p. 35, and Appendix 13 of this volume]

[111] See the introduction to the Apocalypse. Bishops, under the name of angels, were already instituted in seven cities of Asia. And yet the epistle of Clemens (which is probably of as ancient a date) does not lead us to discover any traces of episcopacy either at Corinth or Rome. [The date of the first letter (the second is spurious) of Clement is generally admitted to be about 100 ; it is an admonition addressed by the Roman to the Corinthian church. The author is supposed by some to be no other than Flavius Clemens, the cousin of Domitian who was put to death by him for θεότης, by others to be one of his freedmen (so Lightfoot, who has edited the letter in his Apostolic Fathers).]

[112] Nulla Ecclesia sine Episcopo, has been a fact as well as a maxim since the time of Tertullian and Irenæus.

[113] After we have passed the difficulties of the first century, we find the episcopal government universally established, till it was interrupted by the republican genius of the Swiss and German reformers.

[114] See Mosheim in the first and second centuries. Ignatius (ad Smyrnæos, c. 3, &c.) is fond of exalting the episcopal dignity. Le Clerc (Hist. Eccles. p. 569) very bluntly censures his conduct. Mosheim, with a more critical judgment (p. 161), suspects the purity even of the smaller epistles.

[115] Nonne et Laici sacerdotes sumus? Tertullian, Exhort. ad Castitat. c. 7. As the human heart is still the same, several of the observations which Mr. Hume has made on Enthusiasm (Essays, vol. i. p. 76, quarto edit.) may be applied even to real inspiration.

[116] Acta Concil. Carthag. apud Cyprian. Edit. Fell, p. 158. This council was composed of eighty-seven bishops from the provinces of Mauritania, Numidia, and Africa; some presbyters and deacons assisted at the assembly; præsentis plebis maximâ parte.

[117] Auguntur præterea per Græcias illas, certis in locis concilia, &c. Tertullian de Jejuniis, c. 13. The African mentions it as a recent and foreign institution. The coalition of the Christian churches is very ably explained by Mosheim, p. 164-170.

[118] Cyprian, in his admired treatise De Unitate Ecclesiæ, p. 75-86.

[119] We may appeal to the whole tenor of Cyprian's conduct, of his doctrine, and of his Epistles. Le Clerc, in a short life of Cyprian (Bibliothèque Universelle, tom. xii. p. 207-378), has laid him open with great freedom and accuracy.

[120] If Novatus, Felicissimus, &c., whom the bishop of Carthage expelled from his church, and from Africa, were not the most detestable monsters of wickedness, the zeal of Cyprian must occasionally have prevailed over his veracity. For a very just account of these obscure quarrels, see Mosheim, p. 497-512.

[121] Mosheim, p. 269, 574. Dupin, Antiquæ Eccles. Disciplin., p. 19, 20.

[122] Tertullian, in a distinct treatise, has pleaded against the heretics the right of prescription, as it was held by the apostolic churches.

[123] The journey of St. Peter to Rome is mentioned by most of the ancients (see Eusebius, ii. 25), maintained by all the Catholics, allowed by some Protestants (see Pearson and Dodwell de Success. Episcop. Roman.), but has been vigorously attacked by Spanheim (Miscellanea Sacra, iii. 3). According to father Hardouin, the monks of the thirteenth century, who composed the Æneid, represented St. Peter under the allegorical character of the Trojan hero.

[124] It is in French only that the famous allusion to St. Peter's name is exact. Tu es Pierre et sur cette pierre. — The same is imperfect in Greek, Latin, Italian, &c., and totally unintelligible in our Teutonic languages.

[125] Irenæus adv. Hæreses, iii. 3. Tertullian de Præscription., c. 36, and Cyprian Epistol. 27, 55, 71, 75. Le Clerc (Hist. Eccles. p. 764) and Mosheim (p. 258, 578) labour in the interpretation of these passages. But the loose and rhetorical style of the fathers often appears favourable to the pretensions of Rome.

[126] See the sharp epistle from Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea, to Stephen, bishop of Rome, ap. Cyprian Epistol. 75.

[127] Concerning this dispute of the re-baptism of heretics, see the epistles of Cyprian, and the seventh book of Eusebius.

[128] For the origin of these words, see Mosheim, p. 141. Spanheim, Hist. Ecclesiast. p. 633. The distinction of *Clerus* and *Laicus* was established before the time of Tertullian.

[129] The community instituted by Plato is more perfect than that which Sir Thomas More had imagined for his Utopia. The community of women, and that of temporal goods, may be considered as inseparable parts of the same system.

[130] Joseph. Antiquitat. xviii. 2. Philo, de Vit. Contemplativ.

[131] See the Acts of the Apostles, c. ii. 4, 5, with Grotius's Commentary. Mosheim, in a particular dissertation, attacks the common opinion with very inconclusive arguments.

[132] Justin Martyr, Apolog. Major, c. 89. Tertullian, Apolog. c. 39.

[133] Irenæus ad Hæres. i. iv. c. 27, 34. Origen in Num. Hom. ii. Cyprian de Unitat. Eccles. Constitut. Apostol. i. ii. c. 34, 35, with the notes of Cotelerius. The Constitutions introduce this divine precept by declaring that priests are as much above kings, as the soul is above the body. Among the tythable articles, they enumerate corn, wine, oil, and wood. On this interesting subject, consult Prideaux's History of Tythes, and Fra Paolo delle Materie Beneficarie; two writers of a very different character.

[134] The same opinion which prevailed about the year 1000 was productive of the same effects. Most of the donations express their motive, "appropinquante mundi fine." See Mosheim's General History of the Church, vol. i. p. 457.

[135]

Tum summa cura est fratribus,
(Ut sermo testatur loquax)
Offerre, fundis venditis
Sestertiorum millia.
Addicta avorum prædia
Fœdis sub auctionibus,
Successor exheres gemit
Sanctis egens parentibus.
Hæc occuluntur abditis
Ecclesiarum in angulis,
Et summa pietas creditur
Nudare dulces liberos.
Prudent. περ? στε?άνων, Hymn 2.

The subsequent conduct of the deacon Laurence only proves how proper a use was made of the wealth of the Roman church; it was undoubtedly very considerable; but Fra Paolo (c. 3) appears to exaggerate when he supposes that the successors of Commodus were urged to persecute the Christians by their own avarice, or that of their Prætorian prefects.

[136] Cyprian. Epistol. 62.

[137] Tertullian. de Præscriptionibus, c. 30. [The stranger was the heretic Marcion.]

[138] Diocletian gave a rescript, which is only a declaration of the old law: "Collegium, si nullo speciali privilegio subnixum sit, hereditatem capere non posse, dubium non est." Fra Paolo (c. 4) thinks that these regulations had been much neglected since the reign of Valerian.

[139] Hist. August. p. 131 [xviii. 49, 6]. The ground had been public; and was now disputed between the society of Christians and that of butchers.

[140] Constitut. Apostol. ii. 35.

[141] Cyprian. de Lapsis, p. 89, Epistol. 65. The charge is confirmed by the 19th and 20th canon of the council of Illiberis.

[142] See the apologies of Justin, Tertullian, &c.

[143] The wealth and liberality of the Romans to their most distant brethren is gratefully celebrated by Dionysius of Corinth, ap. Euseb. l. iv. c. 23.

[144] See Lucian in Peregrin. Julian (Epist. 49) seems mortified that the Christian charity maintains not only their own, but likewise the heathen poor.

[145] Such, at least, has been the laudable conduct of more modern missionaries, under the same circumstances. Above three thousand new-born infants are annually exposed in the streets of Pekin. See Le Comte, Mémoires sur la Chine, and the Recherches sur les Chinois et les Egyptiens, tom. i. p. 61.

[146] The Montanists and the Novatians, who adhered to this opinion with the greatest rigour and obstinacy, found *themselves* at last in the number of excommunicated heretics. See the learned and copious Mosheim, *Secl.* ii. and iii.

[147] Dionysius ap. Euseb. iv. 23. Cyprian, de Lapsis.

[148] Cave's Primitive Christianity, part iii. c. 5. The admirers of antiquity regret the loss of this public penance.

[149] See in Dupin, Bibliothèque Ecclésiastique, tom. ii. p. 304-313, a short but rational exposition of the canons of those councils, which were assembled in the first moments of tranquillity after the persecution of Diocletian. This persecution had been much less severely felt in Spain than in Galatia; a difference which may, in some measure, account for the contrast of their regulations.

[150] Cyprian, Epist. 69 [59].

[151] The arts, the manners, and the vices of the priests of the Syrian goddess are very humorously described by Apuleius, in the eighth book of his Metamorphoses.

[152] The office of Asiarch was of this nature, and it is frequently mentioned in Aristides, the Inscriptions, &c. It was annual and elective. None but the vainest citizens could desire the honour; none but the most wealthy could support the expense. See in the Patres Apostol. tom. ii. p. 200, with how much indifference Philip the Asiarch conducted himself in the martyrdom of Polycarp. There were likewise Bithyniarchs, Lyciarchs, &c. [Cp. Pauly-Wissowa, Encycl., *sub* Asiarches.]

[153] The modern critics are not disposed to believe what the fathers almost unanimously assert, that St. Matthew composed a Hebrew gospel, of which only the Greek translation is extant. It seems, however, dangerous to reject their testimony. [Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν ἑβραϊκῆς διαλέκτου λόγια συνεγράψατο, Papias ap. Euseb., H. E., iii., 39 and 16. Our Greek Matthew is not a translation of this, but may have been compiled from it and Mark, which is generally believed now to be the earliest of the four gospels.]

[154] Under the reigns of Nero and Domitian, and in the cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Ephesus. See Mill, Prolegomena ad Nov. Testament, and Dr. Lardner's fair and extensive collection, vol. xv.

[155] The Alogians (Epiphanius de Hæres. 51) disputed the genuineness of the Apocalypse, because the church of Thyatira was not yet founded. Epiphanius, who allows the fact, extricates himself from the difficulty by ingeniously supposing that St. John wrote in the spirit of prophecy. See Abauzit, Discours sur l'Apocalypse.

[156] The epistles of Ignatius and Dionysius (ap. Euseb. iv. 23) point out many churches in Asia and Greece. That of Athens seems to have been one of the least flourishing.

[157] Lucian in Alexandro, c. 25. Christianity, however, must have been very unequally diffused over Pontus; since in the middle of the third century there were no more than seventeen believers in the extensive diocese of Neo-Cæsarea. See M. de Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclésiast. tom. iv. p. 675, from Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, who were themselves natives of Cappadocia.

[158] According to the ancients, Jesus Christ suffered under the consulship of the two Gemini, in the year 29 of our present era. Pliny was sent into Bithynia (according to Pagi) in the year 110. [The evening on which the moon was first visible began the Jewish month; and by astronomical calculation of the times of conjunction we can determine that the 15th of Nisan might have fallen on Friday in the years 27, 30, 33, and 34 (29 is excluded). But the question is complicated by the uncertainty at what time the Jewish day began. See Wieseler, Synopsis, p. 407.]

[159] Plin. Epist. x. 97.

[160] Chrysostom. Opera, tom. vii. p. 658, 810.

[161] John Malala, tom. ii. p. 144 [p. 420, ed. Bonn]. He draws the same conclusion with regard to the populousness of Antioch.

[162] Chrysostom, tom. i. p. 592. I am indebted for these passages, though not for my inference, to the learned Dr. Lardner. Credibility of the Gospel History, vol. xii. p. 370.

[163] Basnage, Histoire des Juifs, l. 2, c. 20, 21, 22, 23, has examined, with the most critical accuracy, the curious treatise of Philo which describes the Therapeutæ. By proving that it was composed as early as the time of Augustus, Basnage has

demonstrated, in spite of Eusebius (l. ii. c. 17), and a crowd of modern Catholics, that the Therapeutæ were neither Christians nor monks. It still remains probable that they changed their name, preserved their manners, adopted some new articles of faith, and gradually became the fathers of the Egyptian Ascetics. [The Therapeutæ were not Essenes (for whom see Grätz Gesch. der Juden. vol. 3), for they did not secede from the synagogues. P. C. Lucius (Die Therapeuten. 1879) tried to prove that they did not exist, and that Philo's treatise (to which the earliest reference is in Eusebius) is a forgery, c. 300, The genuineness is defended by Mr. Conybeare in his recent ed. and P. Wendland, die Therapeuten, 1896.]

[164] See a letter of Hadrian, in the Augustan History, p. 245 [xxix. 8, 1].

[165] For the succession of Alexandrian bishops, consult Renaudot's History, p. 24, &c. This curious fact is preserved by the patriarch Eutychius (Annal. tom. i. p. 334, Vers. Pocock [date 10th century]), and its internal evidence would alone be a sufficient answer to all the objections which Bishop Pearnos has urged in the *Vindiciæ Ignatianæ*.

[166] Ammian. Marcellin. xxii. 16.

[167] Origen contra Celsum, l. i. p. 40 [p. 757, Migne].

[168] *Ingens multitudo* is the expression of Tacitus, xv. 44.

[169] T. Liv. xxxix. 13, 15, 16, 17. Nothing could exceed the horror and consternation of the senate on the discovery of the Bacchanalians, whose depravity is described, and perhaps exaggerated, by Livy.

[170] Eusebius, l. vi. c. 43. The Latin translator (M. de Valois) has thought proper to reduce the number of presbyters to forty-four.

[171] This proportion of the presbyters and of the poor to the rest of the people was originally fixed by Burnet (Travels into Italy, p. 168), and is approved by Moyle (vol. ii. p. 151). They were both unacquainted with the passage of Chrysostom, which converts their conjecture almost into a fact [see above, p. 334. Cp. Appendix 14.].

[172] *Serius trans Alpes, religione Dei susceptâ*. Sulpicius Severus, l. ii. [32, 1]. These were the celebrated martyrs of Lyons. See Eusebius, v. 1. Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclésiast.* tom. ii. p. 316. According to the Donatists, whose assertion is confirmed by the tacit acknowledgment of Augustin, Africa was the last of the provinces which received the gospel. Tillemont, *Mém. Ecclésiast.* tom. i. p. 754.

[173] *Tum primum intra Gallias martyria visa*. Sulp. Severus, l. ii. [*ib.*]. With regard to Africa, see Tertullian ad Scapulam, c. 3. It is imagined that the Scyllitan martyrs were the first (Acta Sincera Ruinart. p. 34). One of the adversaries of Apuleius seems to have been a Christian. Apolog. p. 496, 497, edit. Delphin.

[174] *Raræ in aliquibus civitatibus ecclesiæ, paucorum Christianorum devotione, resurgerent*. Acta Sincera, p. 130. Gregory of Tours, l. i. c. 28. Mosheim, p. 207, 449.

There is some reason to believe that, in the beginning of the fourth century, the extensive dioceses of Liège, of Treves, and of Cologne composed a single bishopric, which had been very recently founded. See Mémoires de Tillemont, tom. vi. part i. p. 43, 411. [Duchesne, Mémoires sur l'origine des diocèses episc. dans l'ancienne Gaule, 1890.]

[175] The date of Tertullian's Apology is fixed, in a dissertation of Mosheim, to the year 198. [197-8. His Ad Nationes, written either just before or just after, or partly before and partly after, the Apologeticum, covers the same ground briefly.]

[176] In the fifteenth century, there were few who had either inclination or courage to question, whether Joseph of Arimathea founded the monastery of Glastonbury, and whether Dionysius the Areopagite preferred the residence of Paris to that of Athens.

[177] The stupendous metamorphosis was performed in the ninth century. See Mariana (Hist. Hispan. l. vii. c. 13, tom. i. p. 285, edit. Hag. Com. 1733), who, in every sense, imitates Livy, and the honest detection of the legend of St. James by Dr. Geddes, Miscellanies, vol. ii. p. 221.

[178] Justin Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryphon, p. 341. Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. i. c. 10. Tertullian adv. Jud. c. 7. See Mosheim, p. 203.

[179] See the fourth century of Mosheim's History of the Church. Many, though very confused circumstances, that relate to the conversion of Iberia and Armenia, may be found in Moses of Chorene, l. ii. c. 78-89. [Milman notes that Gibbon "had expressed his intention of withdrawing the words 'of Armenia,' from the text of future editions" (Vindication, Works, iv. 577). Christianity spread at an early time in Armenia, but its beginnings are enveloped in obscurity, and the traditions are largely legendary. The history of the Armenian church begins with Gregory Lusavoritch (Illuminator), consecrated bishop by Leontius of Cappadocia, to which see the Armenian bishopric was at first subject. The main source for Gregory is an early Life incorporated in the history of Tiridates by Agathangelus (translated by Langlois, Fr. Hist. Græc. vol. v.). See further vol. iii. Appendix 13.]

[180] According to Tertullian, the Christian faith had penetrated into parts of Britain inaccessible to the Roman arms. About a century afterwards, Ossian, the son of Fingal, is *said* to have disputed, in his extreme old age, with one of the foreign missionaries, and the dispute is still extant, in verse and in the Erse language. See Mr. Macpherson's Dissertation on the Antiquity of Ossian's Poems, p. 10.

[181] The Goths, who ravaged Asia in the reign of Gallienus, carried away great numbers of captives; some of whom were Christians, and became missionaries. See Tillemont, Mémoires Ecclésiast. tom. iv. p. 44.

[182] The legend of Abgarus, fabulous as it is, affords a decisive proof that, many years before Eusebius wrote his history, the greatest part of the inhabitants of Edessa had embraced Christianity. Their rivals, the citizens of Carrhæ, adhered, on the contrary, to the cause of Paganism, as late as the sixth century.

[183] According to Bardesanes (ap. Euseb. Præpar. Evangel.), there were some Christians in Persia before the end of the second century. In the time of Constantine (see his Epistle to Sapor, Vit. l. iv. c. 13), they composed a flourishing church. Consult Beausobre, Hist. Critique du Manichéisme, tom. i. p. 180, and the Bibliotheca Orientalis of Assemani.

[184] Origen contra Celsum, l. viii. p. 424 [p. 1621 (πάντο ἄγιοι). Cp. App. 14.]

[185] Minucius Felix, c. 8, with Wowerus's notes. Celsus ap. Origen., l. iii. p. 138, 142 [p. 984, *sqq.*]. Julian ap. Cyril. l. vi. p. 206. Edit. Spanheim.

[186] Euseb. Hist. Eccles. iv. 3. Hieronym. Epist. 83 [*leg.* 84. But in Migne's arrangement, ep. 70, vol. i. p. 667. Since Gibbon wrote there have been discovered, not the Apology of Aristides in its original form, but materials for reconstructing it. These consist of (1) a Syriac version or paraphrase found on Mount Sinai by Mr. J. Rendel Harris (published in Robinson's Texts and Studies, 1891), (2) a fragment of an Armenian translation (published at Venice by the Mechitarists, 1878), (3) a loose Greek reproduction, incorporated in the Tale of Barlaam and Josaphat (see Robinson, *loc. cit.*). In the second superscription of the Syriac version, the work is addressed to Antoninus Pius, which is inconsistent with the statement of Eusebius, who, however, had not seen the book.]

[187] The story is prettily told in Justin's Dialogues. Tillemont (Mém. Ecclésiast. tom. ii. p. 334), who relates it after him, is sure that the old man was a disguised angel.

[188] Eusebius, v. 28. It may be hoped that none, except the heretics, gave occasion to the complaint of Celsus (ap. Origen., l. ii. p. 77) that the Christians were perpetually correcting and altering their Gospels.

[189] Plin. Epist. x. 97. Fuerunt alii similis amentia, cives Romani . . . Multi enim omnis ætatis, *omnis ordinis*, utriusque sexûs, etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur.

[190] Tertullian ad Scapulam. Yet even his rhetoric rises no higher than to claim a *tenth* part of Carthage.

[191] Cyprian. Epist. 79 [80].

[192] Dr. Lardner, in his first and second volume of Jewish and Christian testimonies, collects and illustrates those of Pliny the younger, of Tacitus, of Galen, of Marcus Antoninus, and perhaps of Epictetus (for it is doubtful whether that philosopher means to speak of the Christians). The new sect is totally unnoticed by Seneca, the elder Pliny, and Plutarch [and Dion Chrysostom].

[193] If the famous prophecy of the Seventy Weeks had been alleged to a Roman philosopher, would he not have replied in the words of Cicero, "Quæ tandem ista auguratio est, annorum potius quam aut mensium aut dierum?" De Divinatione, ii. 30. Observe with what irreverence Lucian (in Alexandro, c. 13), and his friend Celsus ap.

Origen. (l. vii. p. 327 [p. 1440, Migne]), express themselves concerning the Hebrew prophets.

[194] The Philosophers, who derided the more ancient predictions of the Sibyls, would easily have detected the Jewish and Christian forgeries, which have been so triumphantly quoted by the fathers, from Justin Martyr to Lactantius. When the Sibylline verses had performed their appointed task, they like the system of the millennium, were quietly laid aside. The Christian Sibyl had unluckily fixed the ruin of Rome for the year 195, a.u.c. 948.

[195] The fathers, as they are drawn out in battle array by Dom Calmet (Dissertations sur la Bible, tom. iii. p. 295-308), seem to cover the whole earth with darkness, in which they are followed by most of the moderns.

[196] Origen ad Matth. c. 27, and a few modern critics, Beza, Le Clerc, Lardner, &c., are desirous of confining it to the land of Judea.

[197] The celebrated passage of Phlegon is now wisely abandoned. When Tertullian assures the Pagans that the mention of the prodigy is found in *Arcanis* (not *Archivis*) *vestris* (see his Apology, c. 21), he probably appeals to the Sibylline verses, which relate it exactly in the words of the gospel [*archiuis* is in all the MSS. except one, which has *arcanis*, and is certainly right. See Bindley's ed. p. 78. The official report of Pilate is said to be meant.]

[198] Seneca Quæst. Natur. i. 1, 15, vi. 1, vii. 17. Plin. Hist. Natur. l. ii.

[199] Plin. Hist. Natur. ii. 30 [a chapter remarkable for its brevity].

[200] Virgil. Georgic. i. 466. Tibullus, l. i. [*leg.* ii.]. Eleg. v. ver. 75. Ovid. Metamorph. xv. 782. Lucan, Pharsal. i. 540. The last of these poets places this prodigy before the civil war.

[201] See a public epistle of M. Antony in Joseph. Antiquit. xiv. 12. Plutarch in Cæsar. p. 471 [c. 69]. Appian. Bell. Civil. l. iv. Dion Cassius, l. xlv. p. 431 [c. 17]. Julius Obsequens, c. 128. His little treatise is an abstract of Livy's prodigies.

[1] There are internal confirmations of this conclusion, — signs of a special interest taken by Jordanes in the Alans; see *Getica*, xv. 83, xxiv. 126-7, xliii. 226. See Mommsen, *Procœmium* to his edition, p. x.